

GEORGES CLEMENCEAU

*THE TIGER OF FRANCE*

GEORGES LECOMTE

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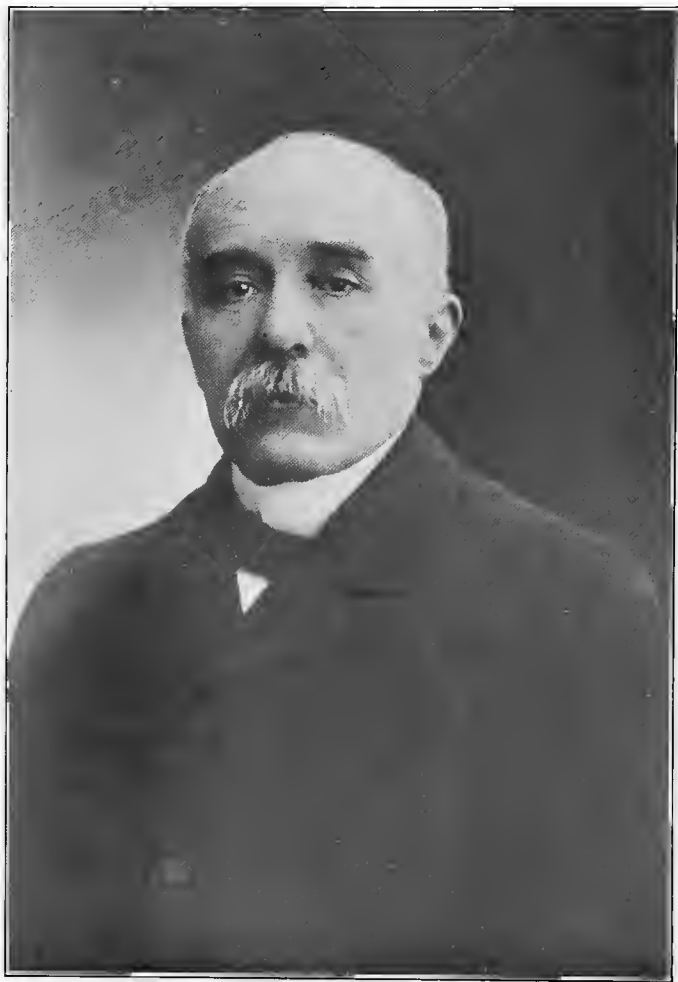
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## *THE TIGER OF FRANCE*

BY  
GEORGES LECOMTE

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GEORGES CLEMENCEAU  
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## I

### ALL FOR FRANCE

THE life of Clemenceau is sixty years of battle for Liberty, for Justice, for a better lot for men, and, dominating all, a passionate love for France which, for him, is identified with this ideal.

No one in our time has fought for his opinions more sharply, with more witty and bolder good humor, with more implacable, jovial and keen logic.

A party man he certainly was, and with what untiring ardor; but without ever losing sight of the higher interests of his country!

Those who approached him at the moment of our most violent internal struggles can ever bear witness that the fierceness of his blows resulted less from his ardent temperament, over which he always keeps full control, than from his faith in the correctness of his ideas and from his conviction that, in trying to have them prevail, he was defend-

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ing best the moral power and the future of the country.

Therefore, it is without effort that he ceases to think, write, speak or act as a party man each time, in the hours of international tension—Tangiers, Casablanca, Agadir, defender of the law for three years' military service—he feels it his duty to unite our forces and to make a stand for the safety of France.

And from the second of August, 1914, the day when Germany attacked without waiting until war should be declared—so violent was her murderous frenzy—M. Clemenceau, having no other thought than the protection of the country, devoted to it all his energies, all his vigilant clear-sightedness, all the authority which his ardor, his past as a patriot, his talent and his services gave him over men.

No more adversaries! And, what is more difficult, no more friends except those who, like him, consecrated themselves passionately to the defense of the French soil, of the French soul, of the right of men and of nations to be free! No other party than that of France! His wonderful articles in



his paper, *L'Homme Libre*, of a quickening firmness and of a tenderness which, while comforting his readers, brought tears to their eyes, resounded like calls to arms, like cries of love and grief.

Indeed, those who remember his noble, vibrating pages of *L'Aurore* at the time when Pan-Germanism wanted French capitulation at Tangiers or war, and his prophetic campaign in favor of a return to three years' military service, understood still better the great, radiant heart which hid itself under sarcasm, under irony, under combative fierceness, and the unconquerable patriotic fervor which a half century of violent political struggles had not been able to quench.

From these very days of anguish, it was evident that Clemenceau, who, on other points, had not always been in accord with the whole of the Nation, found himself in perfect communion of ideas with it.

The terrible drama that he had always foreseen and feared—how many of his pages bear witness to it!—found him morally ready for the most resolute acts of preservation. In his stirring articles of that period, which one will never re-read later with-

out emotion, he is one of the most faithful and poignant interpreters of the suddenly awakened heroism of the French people, of the stoical resignation which this people attempts, in order never to lose this firmness, even during the worst trials.

And the Nation later did not forget that Clemenceau, in relieving his own heart, had expressed magnificently its hope, its faith, its will not to die.

For it was with the knife at her throat, that France, wholly given up to her dream of peace, saw brutally put before her the question: life or death!

Many pages of Clemenceau, which are easy to find in his twenty years of daily articles, prove that he had not waited for the cataclysm to insist that if misfortune wished the red specter of war to rise over the world through the act of Germany, insatiable for prey and for power, it would no longer be for this or that province for which France must struggle, but for her very existence. And France, torn from her noble, pacific illusion, came to understand, in a sudden illumination, that such, indeed, were the stakes.

A party man, who never lost from view his nation's interest, Clemenceau was also, with all his

restrained ardor, with all the resources of a quick and clear intelligence, all the vigor of his nerves of steel and of his implacable logic, with also the charm of his witty and sarcastic joviality, a terrible fighter.

Strong in his convictions, carefully considered and examined in his heart, persuaded, except in case of a successful demonstration to the contrary, that he is right, *he wills* to be right. He is against his habitual enemies, of course; but also—and this is more meritorious—he is, on occasion, against his own friends, when he believes that they are mistaken. And in many memorable circumstances, he has valiantly proved it. For example, a certain speech in the Senate on freedom in teaching, shows that a man of that temper is a prisoner only of his reason.

In battle—which as a courageous man he loves, and the risks of which have never stopped him—he admits no underhanded attacks, no perfidy, no crafty insinuations.

He goes ahead with blows straight from the shoulder. As they say in the language of the fencing-school, he has a good thrust and a quick parry.

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He is a delicate blade. He plays close but his play is clean. As strongly as he is assailed, he in his turn remains wittily courteous in the most difficult situations, but with a courtesy sharpened and ready for cutting replies.

Can one be astonished that good form and politeness do not always disarm anger when profound convictions and social interests are concerned? A redoubtable fighter, because of these very qualities, M. Clemenceau, so resolute in the defense of his opinions and in his care to put his acts in harmony with them, has created for himself strong hatreds which, moreover, are renewed according to the phases of his uninterrupted battle of sixty years.

Beside the men who, satisfied for having crossed swords for their principles even if they were defeated, are proud of having been at close quarters with such a fighter and who esteem him for his undoubted loyalty and for the fairness of his fighting, there are others who never pardon the wit, the eloquence, the logic to which they have succumbed in spite of their merits and who, filled with rancor, watch for the hour of cunning revenge.

Finally there are those who, worthy of respect

for the ardor of their convictions, but not separating the ideas which they execrate from the champions by whom the ideas are defended, wish to knock down men in order to strike at their doctrines.

A redoubtable adversary, because he incessantly battled for his convictions, which have never varied for sixty years and which never admit of compromise, M. Clemenceau garnered in the course of his long, harassed existence, an ample harvest of such hatreds. Some of them were implacable. As happens too often in the feverishness of political struggles in which, wholly given over to the passion of the passing moment, one does not take enough care to keep intact one's forces of the future, they do not give way before the most prodigious phantasmagoria. And the crowds, too often bewildered by a vehemence which does not grow weary of making a great disturbance, and not having enough coolness to control their impressions, throw off all restraint.

As a result, M. Clemenceau's usual mode of action was modified for a short time. Up to that moment he had spoken much and acted still more.

From that time on, deprived for some years of the parliamentary tribune, he wrote more than he spoke.

Who could complain? Not French literature surely, which he enriched with masterly pages. Nor is it the cause of human progress which can suffer, nor that of the country which, with his pen in his hand, he did not cease to serve powerfully with still more liberty than he had had on the tribune, where, in order to prove his point, every orator, fascinating as he may be, must reckon with the immediate opposition of his audience.

In the peace of his study, whence he appeals to the men of his time through newspapers and books, each one of his writings is a deed. Moreover, in this new form he continues to say the same thing, to uphold the same political and social conceptions. In the meditation of a life which from that time on is spared external disturbance, the more he puts his ideas to the test, the more he is convinced of their correctness. With sharp dialectics, in strong and concise language, he defends his unchangeable doctrines by discussing subjects which the passing hour chances to offer.

Far from being struck to the ground, he discov-

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ers an unsuspected talent. He has been forced to forge a new weapon. A great writer is born to us. And we have a great orator, ready, when the hour comes, to reanimate the tribune with his fulminating logic.

He remains a force; and even a force increased by means of action that no one suspected. Without awaiting the caprice of voters, M. Clemenceau finds in himself the possibility of serving Liberty, Right, France.

Short-lived hatreds luckily have not succeeded in making absolute confusion, for we were not far away from the critical hours—Tangiers, Casablanca, Agadir, three years' military service, War!—when if such a force had really been struck down in the hubbub of our internal struggles, France would have been deprived of one of her most fervent and useful champions.

Even those who then struck him the hardest blows were the first to rejoice—because they are patriots before all else—that these blows had not been mortal.

What a lesson! Let us meditate upon it. Above all, may we keep the memory of it when, on the

morrow of victory, our political quarrels will spring up again, unless our fraternity of five years of sorrow and suffering preserve us from them.

As for me, how could I ever forget that evening last winter when, with the other representatives, of a sorrowing association, we went to see M. Clemenceau in the Premier's office, in order to tell him, in the name of our dead, the hope that we all—whatever our opinions were before 1914—placed in him for an energetic conduct of the war until a consoling victory was won.

All the men assembled around him had the right to speak since all were suffering for the country, since all were constituting themselves the pious interpreters of the young Frenchmen who had been sacrificed in order that France might live.

But how many more of those were among them who, joining the torture of anxiety to that of regrets and grief, have still, after such sacrifices, children in the battle and are breathless with fear to-day at the same time that they weep over the anguish of yesterday. Apprehensions they hide, tears they choke back in order to feel them-



selves more worthy of the sons whose resignation and heroism dictate to them their duty forever.

Delegations of bruised people whose voice makes the voice of the dead heard cannot be neglected. Among its members, all thinking only of the safety of the country, dreaming only of strengthening by their confident sympathy the action of the patriot minister who directs with so much ardor the work of national defense, was found one of the men who, deceived, and convinced that they were acting in the interest of the country, formerly flung themselves violently in tragic hand-to-hand struggles against M. Clemenceau.

There are terrible conflicts of the past, which, however, very few of those present remember. These stories count so little in history when they have not killed their men at the first onset or paralyzed his power forever!

While still very young, I had been the unhappy witness of this clash. In spite of the emotions and the troubles of the hour, I remembered it. For the first time since that battle I saw these two ancient adversaries face to face. And I looked at them.

In what a different atmosphere and with what

other feelings they found themselves! The aggressor of former times, who had struck these blows in the name of the country, came to tell Clemenceau of his confidence in his patriotic energy, to place in him the hope of a tortured father who does not want the sacrifice of his heroic child to be in vain.

Since this furious assault twenty-five years have passed during which the minister of to-day, continuing the senator and the polemist of yesterday, the orator and the deputy of former years, has multiplied his efforts to have France strengthen her armor of defense and to keep faith in herself.

Perhaps our companion, to whom a similar grief united us, was so grateful to M. Clemenceau for his salutary campaigns and for his proud, French attitude, that, quite naturally, he no longer remembered their less cordial encounter in the past.

To-day, there are in all hearts so many more anxious preoccupations in which it is right that these indistinct trifles should be submerged! At any rate, not one of us showed the Chief of the National Defense more esteem and gratitude.

As touching as the interview was, I wished that, for the moral value of this lesson, our companion

had forgotten nothing and that, at this very moment, in the fervor of his patriotic hopes and, under the pressure of sorrow which was making him speak, he had had enough memory—I do not speak of his sincerity, which is beyond the shadow of a doubt—to say to himself, “What good fortune for France that our blows did not carry and that this Frenchman is still standing to defend her!”

I do not know what happened really in his soul; but I am sure that before this adversary, who one day had disengaged himself from a group of men to leap in fury at Clemenceau’s throat and strike him down, the Minister of War acted and spoke as if he had forgotten, as if nothing of these old struggles between Frenchmen had remained, could not remain in the mind of a man who is thinking only of maintaining the union of all citizens for the supreme effort for deliverance and who, neglecting all that divided us for the collective work of national defense, is haunted by but one idea—the safety of his country.

“I am not here to play politics,” he declared to us. “I am making war.”

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Calm, attentive to the suggestions of the speakers, he told us his hopes and what we could do, in a moral way, to help him to realize them. Neither his black eyes, so alert, so lively in his quiet face, nor his voice, grave, like his meditation, in spite of its unaltered youthful ring and certain shades of combative joviality, reveal any memory of former times.

Some prejudice remained against him in the country where bursts of confidence and instinctive admiration for certain men were often disconcerted by his harsh criticism.

It was difficult to pardon him for the sharpness of his attacks against the most popular men among those who, after having saved all they could for France, that is to say, her honor, founded the Republic with him and organized it by trying to maintain order in the newly won liberty.

He was against any scattering of our forces for the sake of the conquest of a great colonial empire. The reasons which he gave so eloquently for this fight for a more rapid realization of the democratic régime or for the grouping of all our military forces

against German aggression, always to be feared, were far from having convinced every one.

The ardent patriotic campaigns of Clemenceau in fateful hours, his attitude, so firm, so dignified, so clever in the face of German demands, at the time of the dangerous conflict in regard to the deserters of Casablanca, and later his magnificent articles in which the national soul found expression of its will, caused little by little the old misunderstanding to disappear.

Clemenceau, who had never ceased to exercise great power through his talent as an orator and writer, and who kept through it all his prestige in the eyes of countless Frenchmen, appeared to most of them as a force in reserve and a hope.

How many times in the course of recent trips to our villages and cities have we not heard said by good people who were formerly stubborn but now won over: "Sometimes, I felt so far away from him! I have not always liked him! But we must recognize the fact that without him so many sacrifices were running the risk of having been made in vain, and his mighty hand has saved every-

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thing. . . . He is my man to-day, because he is France's man."

Yet it is not alone the roaring of his fiery passion against the measures of certain ministers who had come into power since 1914 which irritated people against him. They were astonished that in the midst of war he launched such vigorous campaigns against methods which he considered bad and against men whom he reproached with not being able to free themselves from these methods. His reasons were not always understood. Therefore many people were irritated.

Displeased at such vehemence in such a crisis, they did not make allowance for that ardor which glowed, for that conviction which wants to convince, that anxious and passionate love for France. They did not take into consideration that these violent imprecations and these sharp remarks, which relieved the apprehension of a Frenchman whose whole strength is being exerted for the safety of the country, harbor no lasting hatred against individuals. Scarcely is the resistance broken down, when the sarcasm or the reproach hurled in the

battle is effaced from his mind, ardent but without rancor.

His friends, without getting too much stirred up over the keen shafts of his irony, and without taking the harshness of his polemics tragically, may have sometimes regretted his judgment of certain men and certain deeds. Yet even when it happened that they were not in accord with him, since they knew his clear-sightedness, his sincerity and his desire to serve his country, they still did him the honor, while not sharing certain of his opinions, of being disturbed over such lack of harmony. Therefore, estimating at its high value the great French force which M. Clemenceau represents with his clearness, his energy and his radiance, they did not cease saying to those who were exasperated by his violent censure since the beginning of the war: "Don't get angry! Have faith in his love for France! He is the sentinel on watch on the ramparts. His sharp black eyes are fixed upon the drama. At the least flutter of his old heart beating for the deliverance of the country, he utters a wild cry of alarm!" To those who are bitter and sad and who, fearing the breaking down of our re-

sistance, wish that the voice of M. Clemenceau might lose its prestige in his country, we repeat: "What impudence! What a mistake! Let us rather keep this force alive. The war will not end without us being in need of him. In critical days, if they must come again, perhaps we shall be relieved and very glad to have at the helm this pilot, who for four years has been leaning over the unfathomable depths."

The critical days which were feared, came. In a period of wavering and uneasiness it was discovered that the soil of the country was mined and that, protected by weakness or culpable plots, bandits in the pay of Germany were setting their wits to work to demoralize the Nation, to corrode the stoicism of our soldiers, to break the instrument of our salvation.

It was a fearful plot through which we almost perished. Clemenceau was in the front rank of the courageous Frenchmen who denounced it. He demanded punishment for it from the tribune of the Senate, on the authority of the services rendered by him, in such a clear-seeing manner, to the Senatorial Commissioners of the Army and of Foreign



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Affairs. All France trembled at his voice. What! After three years of heroism and sacrifice, that is what we have come to! Indifference, carelessness, intrigue were running the risk of making all this useless. War-like effort was paralyzed by such machinations.

Rising up against defeatism, Clemenceau had just proved that he was indeed the watchful and resolute sentinel. Popular acclaim made it understood that he had been the interpreter of the hope of France.

A great and irresistible swing of opinion swept him into the power to carry on the war resolutely until the liberation of the country.

For almost a year, without distinction of party or origin, all French patriots who love their country, enough not to play politics at this moment, are behind him with united and beating hearts. Unanimity of action has been brought about among all those who without giving up any of their personal opinions, are thinking of the safety of their country and its future.

The power of M. Clemenceau's policy is strengthened by the warm confidence with which he feels

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himself surrounded and which he justifies by the most energetic conduct of public affairs and of the war.

The nation recognizes itself in him. He expresses his soul in each one of his words. He realizes its will in each one of his acts. There is a perfect understanding between France and the head of the government. This is one of the most precious elements of Victory.

## II

### POLICIES AND DEEDS

**T**HE political career of M. Clemenceau is too well known by all for it to be necessary to comment at length upon its different stages and incidents; but at least, they permit us to perceive, in passing, certain essential traits of this striking figure which, from now on, is in the immediate foreground of history.

Born the twenty-eighth of September, 1841, at Mouilleron-en-Pareds, near Fontenay-le-Comte, and having his secondary education at the Lycée de Nantes, this young Vendean recruit arrived in Paris in 1860, during the Second Empire. He came to study medicine and fulfill his apprenticeship for man's estate in the Latin Quarter, over which a thrill of liberty was already sweeping.

His father, also a doctor, philosopher, democrat, a lover of books and of beauty, had already inspired in his son, through his personal influence, a desire

for a serious life in the laboratory and the library where the future doctor feels developing within himself the taste for positive sciences, exact knowledge and logical reasoning.

One morning in 1845 after Orsini had thrown his bomb on the retinue of Napoleon III, the authorities, quickly seized with a madness for repression, tore the father of Clemenceau away from his patients and his books to cast him hurriedly into exile along with a number of other men no less innocent of this crime. The young student, indignant at beholding his father arrested without reason by two gendarmes, embracing him, made this promise, with clenched teeth: "I will avenge you!"

"Work!" simply replied his father with handcuffs on his wrists which, moreover, were removed eight or ten days later, so strong was the revolt of the people against such absolutely unjustified violence.

This dialogue is worthy of antiquity. We only recall it to show in what a serious and fervent state of mind our medical student came to the study of science.

It is these months of studious youth, ennobled by

an ardent desire for knowledge, by this lofty idealism, which will always be accompanied by his love for the real and the true, that Clemenceau's clear brain began to acquire that strong, general culture, always increased, at all times and through all, by a vast amount of reading.

That is one of his characteristics which must be remembered from now on, because it distinguishes him from many practical men of action who are sometimes a little too negligent of opinions, and because it appears at every hour, in all the forms of his activity.

But this nervous and vigorous Vendean had too much impetuous vitality and was tempered too early in life by a healthy existence in the country, by the pleasures of the open air, to find joy and interest only among books.

The life of his epoch, with its grandeurs, its sadness, its graces, with unexpected picturesqueness and even its banality, sometimes so stimulating, with its struggles of ideas and the ferments which agitate secretly the great city, arouse this young man, whose whole career, in his discourses, in his political policies, in his writings, reveals him so full of life,

so in love with life, so fitted to create life. Again, this is one of the essential traits of his personality.

With what curiosity, with what fervor he plunges into the life of his times! His father was a republican idealist, a faithful servant of democracy of which he had never asked any thing except to be worthy of the hope which believers of his kind placed in it. He was exactly the type of man of 1848, generous, disinterested, brotherly, patriotic; and he had implanted in the heart of his son his love for liberty. The Latin Quarter was captivated by him. What a charming way, when one possesses nobility of character to carry ones eighteen years of age! Clemenceau shares its thrills. He frequents rarely the debating societies whose purely verbal agitation seems sterile to him. Life in Bohemia does not amuse him; but he soon mingles in the less disordered meetings where his clear firm thinking, his logic and his clean cut speech are appreciated. He is of those men who, even before they have a right to vote, have a manner of authority. He collaborates on ephemeral journals of the opposition party where his articles make him suspected by the government.

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A few weeks passed in the prison of Mazas, in 1862, for writings pronounced subversive of order and, in 1865, his doctor's thesis on *The Generation of Anatomic Elements* in which he reveals his fondness for experimental philosophy, are the two first facts which can be inscribed on his record. After this, curious about the world, he travels in order to see what men are, elsewhere, and how they organize their efforts; in order, also, to love and know France better and to serve her better. There is his stay in England and then a longer stay in America where, as a very scholarly doctor, he teaches French literature and translates Stuart Mills' book, *Auguste Comte and Positivism*.

Then he returns to France. It is in Montmartre among the artisans, the employees, the shop keepers, and the lesser bourgeoisie of the Butte that he sets up his hope for social betterment, his will for justice. He cares for the people. He counsels them. He guards them from moral sickness, from utopian schemes, from discouragement. Ardent and strong, full of faith in the future, he is the support of the weak whom he invariably and sincerely loved, for whom he always spoke, wrote and acted, and

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whom he always wished to protect from all violence whether from above or below.

In 1871 came the war, the rending of France, humiliation, and the suffering of defeat. This memory will never be blotted out. His heart remains deeply wounded by this sorrow. His whole political life retains the mark of it. The Government of National Defense appoints him mayor of Montmartre where he is popular because of the moral and material welfare he has brought about; and in the election in February, Montmartre quickly elects him its deputy to the National Assembly.

He is convinced, with Gambetta, that if France has the courage to be firm in her will to resist, she will wear out Germany, already tired of war, and she will obtain, if not victory, at least a peace which harms her less. Therefore, at Bordeaux, he votes against the peace negotiated so painfully under the Prussian knife by Jules Favre and Thiers.

With grief, and hope, he signs the stirring protestation of fidelity to Alsace-Lorraine. This is a solemn oath which pledges his whole life, which he has never forgotten, and which he will keep.



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Then come still more torturing hours: civil war under the eyes of the conqueror, in the midst of all the ruin. The ferment is most violent at Montmartre. He hurries there and tries to calm the wrath, to clear up fatal misunderstandings and to restore harmony after so much suffering.

The first shots are fired at Montmartre. Another of his characteristics which must be remembered, is that he is horrified by violence, by the hazardous and summary justice of the street corner, which is almost always injustice. Thus, as soon as he hears the first shots, he rushes to this possible tragedy to try to stop it by all the authority of his youthful prestige. Popular anger outstrips him, quick as is his departure, and before M. Clemenceau is able to arrive, the bloody bodies of General Lecomte and General Clement Thomas are lying at the foot of the wall where the mob has shot them. The irreparable has happened.

Between the Government, which has taken refuge at Versailles, to be near the National Assembly, no longer held at Bordeaux, and the *Commune*, which has just set up its rebellious power, he rises to perform the task of conciliation, to avoid new violence,

to spare the young Republic blood-stains on its flag, to free its future from rancor and wrath, to keep new grief and suffering from being added to the present grief and suffering.

Courageous attitude! ungrateful rôle! In order to gain entire freedom of action, he renounces his office of deputy; but finds himself paralyzed by violence. Suspected by all those to whom, on one side or the other, he preaches moderation, he feels that his good will is powerless. Blood flows. Ruin piles up. In the delirium, crimes increase. Terrible repressive measures follow.

After the last volleys normal life takes up its course. Montmartre does not hold a grudge against Clemenceau for having wished to protect the people against itself. From 1871, convinced of the interest he has in the workers, the weak, the disinherited, Montmartre chooses him as its representative in the Municipal Council.

Indeed, having passed his youth in the midst of peasants bowed by toil, and later, among the workers in factories or at the work bench, a witness of the hardness of their lot, the newly elected representative thinks only of ameliorating the conditions

of their work and life and of protecting them against all abuses of power.

His fraternal pity has not talked more than it has wept. He has the restrained emotion of the strong. But from that time on, he affirms, with the rude and sharp accent of sincerity, a deep respect for man and his rights. It resounds in his speeches and later puts into his writings a note of gently scolding tenderness, and inspires his acts many a time.

In the course of his long political life this friendship for the humble has never ceased. It is a friendship somewhat hard, which feels a sort of modesty in not allowing itself to be seen too much, nor indulging in a pathetic note. Therefore, having dreamed only of liberating the people, of educating them, and of preparing them for equitable, social coöperation, for sixty years of active cordiality, M. Clemenceau can smile and shrug his shoulders when he hears himself called "an enemy of the working class" by grandiloquent special orators whose heart is perhaps less close to the workman than is the heart of Clemenceau.

At the Communal Assembly, of which he became

president when quite young, he claimed in behalf of Paris, as a proof of confidence which it merited, the right to administer its own affairs, a right enjoyed by all other communes of France. He scarcely had the time to pursue this campaign for municipal self-government, at that time so ardent, but of exaggerated importance, for in the elections of 1876, after the vote of the Constitution which organized the Republic and after the dissolution of the National Assembly, Montmartre sent Clemenceau to the Chamber of Deputies which, like the newly created Senate, was sitting at Versailles.

The first act of the new deputy, in 1876, was his speech on the immediate and complete amnesty for those condemned by the Commune. This discourse is celebrated because of its loftiness of view, its boldness, its logical, concise and vigorous argument.

He pleaded, as extenuating circumstances, the exasperated and rebellious patriotism of the one party and the fear of the other party of being balked once more in the establishment of the Republic, the restlessness of poverty resulting from the too sudden abolishment of the daily pay of the national guards before the resumption of work, certain

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blunders on the part of the government, the grievous folly of people too long deceived, having suffered too much.

The time to forget had not yet arrived; but if the Chamber of Deputies, moved by this striking speech of moderation, did not follow M. Clemenceau, at least it hailed in him one of the new orators with whom it would be necessary to reckon most carefully.

Very soon M. Clemenceau appears in the front rank of men who, in a Chamber careful not to push evolution unduly and among ministers anxious not to shock the habits of the country, demand a rapid realization of the democratic programme.

The struggles, which at first are intermittent and moderate, become after 1880 bitter and almost continuous.

Whatever personal opinion one may have on the two methods of realizing an ideal, and even if one regrets the lack of harmony which in the two camps hindered able men from placing all their force and ability in the service of France, one must recognize that the attitude of M. Clemenceau was in accord-

ance with all that is known of his temperament and of his passionate firmness of conviction.

His sincerity is evident. He could not think or act otherwise. He is always courteous even when attacking an adversary; but however strongly he may have been forced at times to treat men harshly, it was the ideas behind them that he was attacking.

He fights bravely, face to face, and fairly. He has physical courage as well as moral courage. Precisely because he does not insult or calumniate any one, he does not tolerate insolence or spiteful insinuations. His perfect politeness from which nothing can make him depart even in the bitterest debates, but which is accompanied by a biting wit, is distrustful. Clemenceau detests violence, but he has a strong feeling of his personal dignity. And on the tribune, or elsewhere, he will not allow any one to make a fool of him.

Smiling, amused, quick to parry a thrust, he accepts with humor even a very sly response to his points, but he is recalcitrant against vulgar insults.

After instantly avenging himself by some terrific joke which puts the laughter on his side, he does not fail to gain complete satisfaction by sending his

seconds to call upon his insolent adversary. This office was performed by his two friends, the good-natured giant, Georges Perin, and Paul Menard-Dorian, charming in his affability. These two men honored my youth with their affection for me. The former is a fencer to be feared on the tribune as well as on the duelling-ground. The latter is a peaceful, prudent, business man. How often they were seen walking along, philosophizing, talking of literature and art which they loved, toward the home of the adversary! M. Clemenceau's sensitiveness, which became well known, assured him full freedom of discussion even in the worst attacks.

About the same time M. Clemenceau, never neglecting any means of influencing public opinion, founded his famous newspaper, *La Justice*. Could he have chosen a name more expressive of him? He entrusted the editing to his colleague of the extreme-left, Camille Pelletan, a talented journalist, who excelled in treating the most difficult subjects in a witty and brilliant manner.

Clemenceau was the inspiration of his newspaper, he directed its policy effectively, came every evening to work over the edition and to discuss the ideas

of his collaborators without ever, in his respect for the opinions of others, imposing his own ideas upon them.

However, he wrote very little. At long intervals, according to the exigencies of parliamentary life, he dashed off a few concise, logical and authoritative lines, which were rarely signed by his initials, almost never by his name, but which bore his stamp. He was recognized.

Yet M. Clemenceau had been a journalist. He sent articles to the *Temps* from America; and when he returned to France he had collaborated somewhat on certain papers. But then his political policies consumed all his time. Leaving to his co-editors the comments from day to day, he reserved for himself the resounding exposures from the tribune which had the value of calls to action.

He brought together for the editing of this paper young men who had talent and a future, Alexandre Millerand, Stephen Pichon, Georges Langerre. The latter withdrew very suddenly after a short time. The journal bore the stamp of Clemenceau's personality in other respects besides the political. Contrary to so many parliamentarians who despise



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literature and art, while rendering them a purely formal homage, and who ill-treat them in general in their partisan sheets, Clemenceau, a man of broad culture, brought up by a father who was a philosopher, a scholar and an artist, gave literature and art the important place which they deserve everywhere.

He had only to recall the rôle they played in his own education to realize that he had no right to deprive his readers of them. Extremely attentive to all the manifestations of the mind, he perceived their correlations. He hated walls which narrow the field of the intelligence. In order to understand the reciprocal action of politics and literature, he had no need of the caprice of an election to make him live a most zealous literary life and to make him turn to action through ideas.

From this time on, an acclaimed orator, leader of a great party inflamed by political struggles, he honors art and literature along with science. He knows their influence on the intellectual development of a people. He knows what books, pictures, statues are worth as an expression of its feelings and of its state of mind. Therefore he wants his

readers to be informed in regard to all the works of the human mind.

As long as *La Justice* lived, this combative political journal was one of the most literary of the period. Avoiding the usual contradiction of the advanced sheets which, not long ago, defended almost always the most retrograde forms of literature and art, Clemenceau's journal upheld an art of intelligence and of truth, a literature which was alive, human, social, all trembling with the poetry of reality, turned toward the future, unquestionably in harmony with the political tendencies of the publisher. This was done by the vibrating, colorful talent of Gustave Geffroy, "the Just Man of Justice," according to the title with which he was hailed as the *Prince of Letters* by Barbey d'Aurevilly.

Between a leading editorial by Camille Pelletan, of Millerand or of Stephen Pichon and the amusing political news of Edouard Durranc, a smiling philosopher to whom we owe the famous caption, revived later by the artist Forain, "How fine the Republic was during the Empire," Gustave Geffroy wrote with the most delicate feeling and the finest taste of the works of Claude Monet and of

Rodin, of Camille Pissarro and of Renoir, of J.-F. Raffaëlli and of Chéret, of Eugène Carrière and of Toulouse-Lautrec. In his weekly literary review, if not in his almost daily stories, he studied ardently the books of Edmond de Goncourt, Zola, Alphonse Daudet, Barbey d'Aurevilly, Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, Rosny, Mirbeau, Huysmans, etc., and later, the dramatists of the *Théâtre-Libre*, the poems of the Parnasians, of Paul Verlaine, later those of Albert Samain, and of all the fine writers of the new generation. Never were readers better informed on the art and literature of their time than were those of this political journal.

Clemenceau was delighted and allowed him to continue. Never was a critic freer under a more broad-minded and liberal patron. Finding the time to look at these pictures, to read and love these books of an art so modern, he would have been careful to dispute the opinions of his critic even if they had differed from his own. But what satisfaction he felt to see his critic exalt an art and a literature of intelligence, of life, of truth, of generous social tendencies, in conformity with his own taste! This is a distinguishing characteristic of the

journal, which it is necessary to bring to light, because it establishes an essential trait in Clemenceau's character.

*La Justice* had a charming atmosphere of comradeship about it, with its picturesque decoration of drawings, made by the editors themselves, representing the collaborators of the journal, with Clemenceau at the top and his crew of friendly writers below him, Louis Mullem, Jean Ajalbert, Charles Martel, Léon Millot, etc., men who were faithful to the journal through friendship. The journal was well edited but little read; and, beginning with its directors, it enriched no one.

The office of the "boss" in a corner of the editorial room was far from solemn and was easily accessible. What interesting discussions on books, art and men took place around Gustave Geffroy's table, on a corner of which in order to talk more at ease sat Clemenceau, jovial and bantering, and suddenly launching into a discussion of ideas. Sometimes there were talks on politics in which such men took part as came and went on business, Eugène Carrière, Stephen Pichon, and J.-F. Raffaëlli, Lucien Descaves, Paul Bonnetain, and many

younger men who brought to these discussions the fire of their curiosity and the love for literature.

It was about 1881 that the patriotism of Clemenceau, disapproving the dispersion of our military forces for the sake of colonial conquests, came into collision with the patriotism of other leaders of the Republic, who, without renouncing any of our hopes, thought to arm us better against German aggression by gaining territory, wealth, and soldiers recruited among the native warriors, and by giving us back faith in ourselves, through military glory. At that time a German aggression did not seem probable and moreover did not come to pass during these years of expansion over-seas.

This divergence of views in regard to the successive expeditions to Tunis, Tonkin, Madagascar, Dahomey and Soudan, was prolonged for a long time. The divergence was just so much more sharp because it was a question of the future of the country.

In the two camps there was an equal desire for public welfare and a care for the interests of France: but they were two opposite conceptions

which, in the heat of battle, appeared to be absolutely antagonistic and incapable of being brought into agreement.

Clemenceau's view had numerous determined partisans on the Right as well as on the Left. There were those who, before every other consideration, wanted us to be on guard against a German attack, which was always possible, and who refused to allow our defenses to be weakened even momentarily. There were also those who, in their desire for a generous and peaceful socialistic policy, preferred to devote all their strength to the amelioration of the lot of men. The deputy of the artisans of Montmartre, desirous of making life less hard for the people, belonged, of course, to the latter class. But, beyond this, he had borne with a bleeding heart the tortures, the sufferings, the humiliations of war. He was apprehensive of our rehabilitation which was too rapid to suit him. He had only to recall the alarm of 1875, so vivid still, when we had been saved from irremediable disaster only by the veto of Great Britain and Russia; and he understood at last that the unbroken power of

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France is necessary to maintain the equilibrium of the world.

Well informed in regard to the state of mind of the new Germany, which already regretted not having bled us more, and to the insatiable greed for power developed by her success, from that moment he took into consideration the fact that, sooner or later, her mad idea of world-dominion would prove a peril against which we would have to hold ourselves in constant readiness.

Finally, because of his old friends in the unhappy, annexed territory of Alsace-Lorraine, he became one of those who, finding everywhere the love of French civilization and the vivid memory of France, believed that the peace which seemed to sanction such a revolting oppression of peoples, was precarious. So while we were exerting ourselves in the tasks of peace, he wished us to stand on the frontier with grounded arms that we might be born again and grow strong.

The workers for the policy of expansion had in their hearts the same memories, the same prudence and watchfulness for the future; but, reassured in regard to the danger of an immediate aggression,

they thought that, without compromising our defense and even by acquiring means to strengthen it later, it was their duty to profit by favorable circumstances to increase the national wealth.

With all the means for prompt and decisive action, the more quickly they acted, the sooner we would be assembled again, with increased strength to guard the Vosges.

Unfortunately the lack of harmony in regard to this policy had no other result than to show up our effort by not supporting such a project with sufficient resources.

Now that the conquest of an immense colonial domain has become a happy fact of history, can we not render justice to the clear-sighted, bold statesmen who, before the rivalries of the last ten years, gave to France this increase of power; and, on the other hand, can we not also recognize that the fears of more circumspect people were very natural at that moment?

It is certainly easier to be just in serene history than during the irritation of political battles. At any rate, even those who were not convinced through Clemenceau's arguments and who regretted



his opposition, were glad to acknowledge the loftiness of his views, his constant care for the interests of France, the sober eloquence of his incisive and vigorous speeches.

His speeches of the year 1885 throughout the whole of France dealt with the hastening of democratic reforms and the necessity of a vigilant guard at the frontier without any scattering of strength. They were echoed everywhere and wherever they were made they remained famous.

In spite of the thirty-three years which have passed since the speeches were made, in the provinces his auditors still speak of them as the most striking memory of their lives. It makes little difference whether his listeners were hostile or friendly now; for to-day they have rallied to his splendid effort for national deliverance.

Famous for the stubbornness and the vigor of his opposition, for his incisive eloquence and brilliant argument, admired by some, execrated by others, indifferent to none, he was the leader of a great party for whose triumph he traveled over France on the eve of elections. During several months he spoke from city to city, welcomed by many as a

hope, less warmly by those who reproached him for his inexorable criticism, but who gave to his talent the homage of curiosity.

He was then full of the strength of his young maturity.

When he had descended from the tribune and was waiting for the train, Clemenceau, his force and liveliness unaltered by age, charmed every one by his simplicity, his animation and by the loftiness of some idea suddenly thrust in between two jokes. Only the sullen and morose whom he disconcerted failed to be touched by the charm of his personality.

Twice during my youth I was the witness of the strong impression produced by the orator and man, in his famous "swing around the circle." Moreover, having had occasion several times to verify the lasting impression which it left on the minds of those who heard him, I felt I ought to record in the biography of Clemenceau the great power of this propaganda and the picture which he left in the memory of the town and country people, who came to hear him in the neighboring city.

The uneasiness resulting from the confusion and scandal of these uncertain elections, so painful to

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the honesty of the French people, was not long in producing the Boulangist outbreak.

Clemenceau, who was in sympathy with General Boulanger as long as he believed him to be a patriotic reformer, thinking only of the great task of rehabilitation, was naturally in the front ranks of those who wanted to save France from an unfortunate venture.

It was a long and hard battle during which many blows were exchanged. One cannot throw himself with impunity, as a leader, into the midst of a fight. Long after the order, "Cease firing!" the disappointed and the vanquished were watching for revenge. This is too human a feeling not to be understood.

Clemenceau, who for twenty years had not been sparing of his blows, was particularly exposed to reprisals; but the danger of brawls did not trouble him. On the contrary, with renewed vigor, he kept up the battle for his unchangeable ideas, for the victory of his political methods, and for the means to defend France.

But in the exasperation of political hatred and in the violence of hand to hand struggles, one is rarely

fastidious about the means employed. How many men, even among the best, fail to retain at certain moments, their coolness, their critical sense, and their feeling for moderation.

The most unjust attacks were hurled against Clemenceau. The most fantastic accusations were thrown in his face. In order to recognize their utter falseness, it would have sufficed to examine with calm, good sense the public and private life of Clemenceau, the constant lack of means in which his journal existed in spite of the kindly devotion of rich friends, and of his companions in the fray, ready to serve their cause and their chief.

As proofs were necessary to dupe the honest people who were aroused and credulous and who, with the idea of serving the country, led the assault, needy rascals manufactured them. A storm of forged documents appeared. At first they circulated surreptitiously, but as soon as they fluttered in the wind of battle, their gross and clownish fraud appeared. On the tribune of the Chamber of Deputies, Clemenceau, pushing aside these trumpery accusations, had only to cite indisputable facts to

do justice to them. From that moment not one of them could stand.

The forgers were dragged by the Minister of Public Affairs to the Court of Assizes, where Clemenceau came as a witness to defend the truth. With what serene pride he showed the folly of this venture! But in the violence of political struggles it is not enough to crush so-called proofs. The popular mind holds the impression for a long time.

Thus, while his loyal adversaries, who had been duped by this fraudulent stuff, were grieving over their mistake, others were bent upon perfidious insinuations.

Did Clemenceau's patriotism have any other reason than his concern in his desire for cordial relations with England for our national interest? Does not the history of the last fifteen years prove the beneficence of this idea?

When one examines facts, people and things, against the background of time, how plainly it appears that this idea is in perfect harmony with the whole political policy of Clemenceau, who was always restless in regard to the aggressive whims of Germany and anxious to have more guarantees

against her. One wonders through what strange aberration, even thirty years ago, many people did not see that the policy of Clemenceau was not only logical but necessary because it was in perfect accord with his parliamentary life. The general elections of 1893 were at hand. They were held in the confusion of this outbreak. Public opinion did not have time to get possession of itself, to judge calmly. In 1889 Clemenceau, whose name appeared on the list of voters of the district of Var and Seine, had chosen to vote in this department where many a time the people had appealed to him; but the voters of Var cast their votes haunted by the calumnies daily repeated to them.

Clemenceau was beaten in spite of an admirable campaign of energy and clearness, in spite of his famous speech at Saberne, a model of proud eloquence, the cry of a man who bares his whole life before his adversaries and, forgetting himself, speaks with loftiness and heat.

The people believed that he was beaten, and were eager to stamp upon him with impunity. What means of action, henceforth, had this deputy, without office or tribune, whose influence had been in

his words, and in his power over the representatives of the Nation?

His journal, with its small circulation, retained its influence only because of the political situation of its director. How would he himself live, without fortune and without business? Would not his talent be exhausted by this necessary struggle? And in what way could it show itself? Outside of those who think of their country and deplore its wrongs, what joy there was among men freed from the sound of that sharp voice, from the fear of that keen and pitiless criticism!

As accustomed as they were to the mental power of Clemenceau and to the resources of his intellectual activity, no one suspected his secret strength. Perhaps he knew nothing of it himself. In his early youth he had been a journalist but only for a few months. For twenty-five years he had written almost nothing; and yet, since this was his only means for influence during the period when he was discredited, he began resolutely to write.

With a serenity which astounded his enemies, he shut himself up among his books. In plunging into

work, he tasted the joys of the author, the pleasure of absolute independence. Each morning in *La Justice* he gave his opinion on men and the ideas of the day.

His voice, far from being stifled, rang out. It was quickly recognized that, with his pen in hand, Clemenceau retained all the brilliant gifts of his logic and irony, which had made his spoken words feared before.

There was one unfortunate circumstance. Formerly he only mounted to the tribune at long intervals. Now he spoke every day. As a man bent on realizing his dream, through the medium of the slightest event in the street, in the Chamber of Deputies or in the world, he championed his ideal. And with what powerful sarcasm he handled those whom he believed guilty of desertion or negligence!

No longer constrained by the limitations of his audience, he clearly expressed the most subtle and delicate shades of his thought. He rises to views which, in the fencing on the tribune, are scarcely possible; for the orator must be understood by all at once. His articles, substantial, full of life and



of a lofty philosophy, made a deep impression. They are successful.

History furnishes many examples of writers who become distinguished in political life and make a brilliant career. Is it not the first time, in France at least, that a statesman late in life has begun a brilliant literary career?

Our newspapers contended with each other for his aid. *La Dépêche* of Toulouse and, a little later, the *Journal*, sought him. Every week he wrote striking articles for them, but he did not give up his old *Justice*, which he had founded with such high hope and for which he took such pleasure in writing. He published not only his reflections on current events, but also stories, touching and picturesque, images of life, his impressions of the work of profoundly human artists who interested him. Impressed by the life which characterized his page, *Illustration* asked him for a novel. He wrote *Les plus forts* (The Strongest), a book full of pity for the inevitable destruction of the weak. He points out the sole remedy: social solidarity, justice.

A few months after this brilliant revelation of an "old beginner," as he called himself when he be-

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came Premier at sixty-six, his originality and his importance as a writer were so well established that the friends of Edmond de Goncourt invited him to speak at the great banquet which the French literary world gave to honor the work and life of this great artist.

The politician showed himself that evening, as on other occasions, a scholarly speaker of profound thought, of fine and unerring taste.

Speaking of profoundly human literature, of the truth in the study of manners and history, rendering homage to the love of truth which characterized the author of *Marie Antoinette* and *Germinie Lacerteux*, he was applauded by the thousand writers assembled at the Grand Hotel. This acclamation avenged him for the violent attacks of a short time before, and convinced him that his talent had won him the right to be cited in the first rank of the literary world.

While carrying on his work as a writer, he did not cease to be himself and to defend the ideas of which he had been the apostle, which education had given him and which study, reflection and the knowledge of men and history had strengthened.

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These ideas were, love for his country, passion for Justice and Liberty, a lofty democratic ideal which is not lost in the clouds, but resists an empiricism, faithless and without audacity. As a writer, Clemenceau had only continued his effort as a statesman.

His old electors of Var were not deceived. Regretting the injustice they had done him, they seized the first opportunity for reparation to the man who, with different weapons, always fought the same fight. In a spontaneous outburst which effaced all memory of their former unfaithfulness, they offered to elect him again at a partial election.

They could better understand what a representative they had lost when they saw with what dignity, with what joy at being free, and of having no need of office to serve the cause of mankind, Clemenceau, although thankful to them, claimed his right of absolute independence.

It is a wonderful letter, which, like the famous speech at Saberne, I have kept with care, because it reveals his character. It reads as follows :

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"My dear friend:—

"I am deeply touched by the kind letter in which you offer me the candidacy at the legislative elections. It is a joy to me to see in you one of those who, four years ago, fought me with the greatest ardor. Our past defeat is nothing but an incident in the universal struggle of the weak against the strong. I scarcely remember that I was concerned.

"Since the age of manhood, my heart has been with those conquered by destiny and I proudly bear witness that I have always served them without faltering. I have done all I could for them, even beyond my means, because I am not yet free of the burdens too easily accepted for the advantage of our cause.

"In the cruel struggles which develop so much hatred on the side of the powers that are threatened, I have conquered many powerful enmities, which I am proud to say were merited.

"Their coalition deprived me of the legislative office which I would not have renounced of my own accord.

"Shall I admit it to you? A free lion, I have found my liberty precious. Parliamentary action must have, with the electors as well as the elected, a daily collaboration which cannot exist without some sacrifice of independence.

"To-day I have the right to differ in opinion even with you, my dear friends, if I believe that you are mistaken. Leave me this liberty of will and of deed. I shall only

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employ it to try each day, to show myself worthy of your votes in the past. It will not be difficult for you to choose among yourselves the man who can take up in Parliament of the Republic our program of action for the freedom of the mind against oppression of dogma, for social justice against iniquity.

"And when it is heard that I have nothing to ask of you, nothing but friendly encouragements for the profit of the common cause, then I shall return among you. We will take up our conversations of former times, and we will rejoice in the beautiful Republic in our hearts, of which I hope our children will soon wish to try the same experiment.

"My dear friends, I remain at your sides in the good fight. My thoughts, my acts will be always for more justice, always for more liberty.

"G. CLEMENCEAU."

Several years pass. Clemenceau, in full control of his literary activity, exercises a great political influence through the means he has at hand. Parliament takes notice of the power he has over public opinion and cannot be insensible to the pricks of his spur.

In 1898 an important new journal is founded: *L'Aurore*. What memories of terrible torment the

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name alone recalls! Ernest Vaughan, the director, who had been carrying on Henri Rochefort's *Journal*, asked Clemenceau to write the leader every day, with absolute freedom to express his views.

Here is a new and well manned ship, on which Clemenceau feels that he can fight more effectively than on the old boat, *Justice*, which is a bit disabled. He transports his munitions from one ship to the other. He is convinced that, here as elsewhere, he will have only to continue his struggle for the better utilization of our national strength for Liberty, for the rights of the weak, to gain the realization of his democratic ideal.

Moreover, the state of mind of the political parties has not changed. It is the same atmosphere, the same battle. One scarcely speaks in political circles of a pamphlet in which a writer insinuates, with sketchy arguments, that Captain Alfred Dreyfus of the General Staff, recently condemned for treason, was not judged according to the rules of our law. This apostle of the Symbolistic School, transformed into the champion of justice, known for the bitterness of his criticism and for his interesting history of the Jews, is named Bernard La-

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zare. Obstinate, combative, he carries conviction to certain numbers of our contemporaries.

Clemenceau sees, with some indifference, or rather with a certain antipathy, this little agitation which, if it really amounts to anything, can only distract France from the important problems of her destiny.

As a patriot who has faith in the conscience and clear-sightedness of the chiefs of the army, he believes that, since an officer has been condemned by his peers, it must be that his crime was well proved according to the laws of justice.

This story, therefore, does not interest him and even irritates him a little. He is not far from being angry at the writer who dares to play the rôle of Voltaire.

The day when he agreed with Vaughan to write the daily leaders in *L'Aurore*, after having obtained all guarantees for his personal liberty and for the political orientation of the journal—and this was the essential point to him—he had the curiosity to ask M. Vaughan who the other collaborators would be. Different names were cited to him, among which was the name, Bernard Lazare.

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“I hope,” Clemenceau cut in jovially, “that he is not going to bother us with his Dreyfus story.”

That is exactly where he stood at the beginning of the “affair.” I only speak of it to give a new proof of his liberty of mind and his independence.

Since this was a question of confidence, the loyal patriots and disinterested men on both sides had nothing to renounce in regard to their opinions; and, whatever attitude one took toward this drama, it must be recognized that it was one of the most painful memories of French life.

Therefore, it should be considered as nothing more than history. It is over. A new era has begun upon our battle-fields, in the communion of sacrifice and suffering in city and village.

It is a sacred era because of the blood of our dead and wounded. So much the worse for the unfortunate ones who, weighed down with distrust and suspicion, wish to hypnotize themselves instead of rushing forward to speed the effort for the morrow. On the day of victorious peace, for which we shall have bled and suffered, France will cry to us: “Forward!”

In this state of mind to which reason and patriot-



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ism elevates us, how easy it is, without hurting any one's conviction, to recall the rôle of Clemenceau in this tumultuous chapter of our history.

The former adversaries who had read with beating hearts his wonderful articles in 1905 at the time of the German menace at Tangiers, and later in 1912, followed his persuasive campaign in favor of the three years' law; those who had not forgotten his proud energy in 1908, at the critical hour when, as Premier, he made France respected even in regard to the deserters of Casablanca; those who saw what this aged man was trying to spare us; can these men doubt that if Clemenceau fought the revision of the famous trial, it was because he was convinced that it must be so for the good of the country?

It is the finest homage that their gratitude can render him to-day. These four years of union in peril and in grief make easy that serene justice which, giving life to our strength, alone can prolong that harmony to which we owe our safety.

Could this lover of justice and troubled patriot, whom we have just shown at work, have another attitude from the moment that he believed that

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Law had been violated and the rules which guard it disregarded, and that the stubbornness to acknowledge the mistake, must only harm the moral prestige and strength of the country?

For a long while, at a time when others were quickly aroused, he remained impassive. Certainly, when the first doubts came to him, careful of our national defense, he hesitated before the possible counter-blows of such a debate; but could he suspect that this long and violent debate would spread from the court room and convulse France? His heart had always acquired new strength in the hope and desire for a more watchful guard on the Vosges; and it was due to Alsace and through the agency of his old friend, Scheurer-Kestner, that his doubt grew to conviction. From that moment he would have believed himself a renegade if, knowing that he had justice and the good name of his country to defend, he had stolen away.

We remember the bitter and keen eloquence with which he fought for three years. His adversaries might regret it but they could not fail to recognize it. He was one who ennobled the tragedy of France by the loftiness of his views. And what sovereign

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logic he mingled with his feelings! In this discussion he was faithful to himself. He kept on his own high plane by the power of his reasoning, by his sudden flights above the minute scrutinizing of texts, by the thrills of passion, of anger and of hope, by the brilliancy of his irony.

Do not his friends and enemies also agree in declaring that even in the most passionate days of torment, Clemenceau, careful to wound the country as little as possible, was always able to avoid unjust generalizations and useless violence, each time that he saw men in his camp allow themselves to be carried away by fury toward a dangerous anti-militarism which must lead the weak to a still more foolish and dangerous anti-patriotism, cried: "Beware!" Therefore, having nothing of this kind with which to reproach himself, he had later the moral power which was necessary to combat the spread of such madness.

Clemenceau was not one of those who lingered by the last ripples of the agitation with the secret thought that from that time on all French life would be conditioned; but he did consider that

parliamentary action would supplement his effort as a writer in the still troubled atmosphere where certain social problems would become urgent.

From the department of Var, which constantly renewed its proofs of cordial fidelity, he accepted a senatorship.

In the Luxembourg Palace, as in his journals, *Le Bloc* and *L'Aurore*, from which he was relieved temporarily, he defended his unchanged ideas and the work of the Revolution. He did not conceal its errors and mistakes. He regretted its crimes, but he refused to condemn it piece-meal. He only wished to see the whole of it, which in his eyes was beneficent, and the origin of a new world where the rights of men are safeguarded.

"Plainly the Revolution is not Sinai," one could hear him say sometimes. "But in difficult moments, that is what one must fall back on."

His first reappearance on the tribune showed that, during his voluntarily prolonged absence, he had lost none of his sober vigor, his jovial causticity, his vigorous logic. But one perceived also that this strong bulwark was now protected by ideas which less interrupted meditation and long com-

munion with the highest minds of the past could bring to his brain. The writer which he has become shines through the orator he has not ceased to be; but the life and activity with which he is endowed are unaltered. And on the other hand, since his reason is shown in brilliant and picturesque form in his chats with his colleagues in Parliament, he is more and more listened to.

But he is not always followed. It is true that with characteristic independence he does not hesitate to ride alone in the opposite direction from his party when he believes that his friends are getting dangerously away from salutary principles. For example, an apostle of liberty, for his adversaries as well as for himself, he does not permit any one to tamper with liberty no matter how strong the pretext may be. Thus, while demanding the separation of church and state and the dispersal of the religious order, he defended the freedom of teaching in the parochial schools with a noble respect for what goes on in the depths of the conscience and with a clear-sighted skepticism in regard to such hindrances. It is a memorable speech in which, without caring for what was being thought

round about him, he fights for liberty in which he has faith, just as formerly, with equal contempt for blame or blows, he had fought for justice.

To resist the irritations, the anger and surprise which one calls forth in every camp, and to keep one's influence intact, one must rely on a proud will and on the strength of great talent. Clemenceau, walking ahead without regard for those who are with him, does not feel the need of singing to cheer himself when he finds himself in difficulty.

One of his friends who hoped to see his influence increased for the sake of the country, expressed his regret to him that he did not allow himself to head a group as the offer had been made so often. We heard him answer with conviction: "You do not know how strong one is when he is alone."

This proud reply reveals his character.

He has faith only in energy put into the service of reason.

One day, twenty-five years ago, an acquaintance of mine, who is a writer, regretting that Clemenceau was not in Parliament, told him of his joy in the power he had obtained through literature. The future Minister of National Deliverance

made this reply, great in its glad confidence: "As long as I can talk and write, if I am right, I feel that I am unconquerable."

Every morning in *L'Aurore*, Clemenceau continues to exercise that free and individual influence which is so precious to him. He came back to his journal with the powers of direction; and, not being any longer able to curb the satisfaction of telling his opinion of the men, the ideas and the things of his time, he published a daily article.

He thinks and writes with wonderful independence; but he feels that his readers are with him. They increase, when William II, obedient to the injunctions of Pan-Germanism, makes his theatrical visit to Tangiers, humiliates France by threats and odious demands and when the indignant Clemenceau begins the most patriotic campaign to relieve French hearts, chafing under the outrage.

He belongs to the generation of those who, as men, lived through the defeat and invasion. He suffered from it until he wept unwilling tears. He was one of the witnesses and one of the helpers in the admirable effort which France made in order

to be born again. Although bruised, she has put her faith in the triumph of justice and morality. Without being false to one of her memories or hopes, she has remained at peace. Has she not, therefore, the right to life, to her free development? Does she deserve to suffer extortion and outrage again? Clemenceau does not allow her to be treated as a vassal. Enough of such extortions at the slightest caprice! Torn as she is, France is not so weak that she must be resigned. Let Germany know our resolution never to allow ourselves to be molested any more! And let France, with the sentiment of her strength in the union of her sons, speak firmly in order to force from every one respect for her rights and dignity.

Each morning during the anxiety of this long crisis, Clemenceau, in his flaming articles, makes himself the interpreter of the French grief, anger and energy. He is convinced that a country cannot become resigned to certain things. He thinks that since a great people cannot live in shame, at certain hours it is better to risk everything than to accept all. From that moment France has the same will. He feels. He speaks just so much



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louder. When a Nation rises up under an insult, it is because it has the power to impose its right to live.

Then, firm without provocation, a patriot without boasting or violence, with what grave emotion, with what filial piety he recalls our merits, sets forth our claims, and shows the nobility of our patience which, however, must not be mistaken for cowardice!

Manly and tender articles which are like wonderful cries of love and pride! Each one of these calls for modesty, for justice, for good manners, which Germany hears is like a sharp command: "Halt!" France, whose indignation they express so well, reads them with beating heart. Already the memories of struggles is effaced. She salutes in M. Clemenceau one of her standard bearers!

When the alarm is over, public opinion sweeps him into power. This is the first time that it has been offered to him whatever those intended, who reproached this "demolisher of Ministries" with his "perpetual disappearing acts." He is sixty-five years old. Through what aberration was such a

power left unemployed so long, which would have become more quickly trained by struggling with the exigencies and responsibilities of the government? He accepts it, not in order to reign but to act. Abandoning his pen and his liberty as an orator, he renounces a power more brilliant than the one in which he is installed by the public confidence. But he does not want it to be said, and said correctly, that he is deserting. He interprets government according to the principles to which he has been faithful all his life.

Scarcely is he appointed Minister of the Interior, when a solemn occasion offered to put into practice one of his most constant ideas. A strike breaks out in the mining district. Suddenly it develops to a fearful extent. Violence is feared. They tell him that it will be wise to send troops as usual to prevent disorder. But for forty years in the tribune and in his articles he has been protesting against employing soldiers as a protective measure in strikes. He always said that by having the army appear before any brawl took place the State seemed to take sides with the owner against the workmen. What will he do? They watch him. Moreover,

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the outbreak is increasing and on all sides they press him to act. There is no irreparable damage done yet, or else he would have done his duty, which is to reëstablish order, humanely but firmly. But from hour to hour the fear that violence is near grows.

Then, still leaving the soldiers in their barracks, the Minister of the Interior goes, all alone, to the heart of the strike. Full of fire and with hands outstretched he harangues the strikers. Through yells and menacing jestures, still alone, he plunges into the most tumultuous part of the crowd. The strikers were held in check by the fearlessness of this old man who gave the impression of vigorous youth, by the boldness of this republican chief who wanted to offer to democracy a supreme proof of his confidence in it. He told the strikers that it depended on their wisdom alone and on their moderation in the exercise of their rights whether they would be spared the presence of troops.

They listened to him. They allowed him to depart in spite of a plot, which was revealed to him, but which did not restrain him, to hold him as hostage. Alas, growing more and more excited

from hour to hour, the strikers were not long in wronging their cause by indulging in brutality.

Against brutality it is necessary to protect lives, labor, and property. With a heavy heart, Clemenceau resigned himself to calling out the soldiers, but with order for patience and restraint. Jostled, bruised, they, the military, remain impassive under the missiles with which they are bombarded. Rather than incur the blame of having fired without being forced to, an officer, some infantry and gendarmes fall, bleeding.

Somewhere else, the head of a troop telephones that his men are threatened and demands for them the authority to use their arms. Clemenceau, far away from the riot, cannot find out personally whether the order which is asked for is justified.

It is a moment of perplexity and anxiety. Sorry for the workmen he thinks less of the soldiers, who are also boys of France, men who have a right to live. In the impossibility of judging the question himself, he replies that he cannot give such an order from a distance; and that the captain is the sole judge of the situation, since he alone is in the riot; and that he must obey instructions authorizing

the use of arms only in case the soldiers' lives are in peril.

This fortunate calmness saved all! A little later this chief, who had been left free in his judgment, announced that his men were able to get out without firing a shot. No blood had flowed. What would have been the result of a second's madness!

Two years had passed since he became Premier, while retaining the Ministry of the Interior, when arrogant Germany tried to pick a quarrel with us over the deserters of Casablanca.

This was a perfidious act which no one can forget because it shows with what brutal cunning the Pan-Germanists were trying to force us into war or to demoralize us by giving us, through repeated humiliations, the feeling of our powerlessness. For the sake of their projects of world-dominion with which they were intoxicated they wanted us either conquered or well resigned to slavery and the worst spoliation.

Formerly a noisy minority, these madmen had finished by intoxicating, with their wild greed, the whole of Germany. Junkers and soldiers, mad with

pride, had found accomplices for their unhealthy dreams in excited professors, in big business, which was hampered and insatiable, in commerce crazy about expansion, among the least important professors and teachers zealous for this propaganda for rapine, among employees and workmen avid for bigger pay.

The Crown Prince was jealous of his father and impatient to supplant him. The Pan-Germanists, by making the rabbit-faced young man gesticulate, were striving to control the emperor through the fear of unpopularity. Ready for war, convinced that it would pay them at once in glory and booty, they multiplied pretexts to make it surge forth. Scarcely was one dispute settled amidst the grumblings of their disappointment when another arose. Three years had not passed since the imperial debarkation at Tangiers, when they affronted us by an intolerable demand in regard to two deserters from our Foreign Legion. For a long time Germany had taken umbrage at the Legion which was the refuge of innumerable malcontents from beyond the Rhine. In the bitter propaganda against it one felt Germany's desire to destroy the Legion.

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This time, two Germans enrolled in our Foreign Legion, having deserted, Germany had the idea of snatching them away from our justice. The people which had this fanciful idea is the most military nation of all and the one in which military duty and discipline are most sacred. The intention of exasperating us was only too evident.

We had right on our side incontestably. According to international law, the German demands could not stand. If we weakened in so just a cause it was the abdication of our sovereignty and independence. If we humiliated ourselves before such a wild idea of Germany, how could we hope to have our simplest rights respected by other countries and by her in the future. What suffering, what revolt dwelt in the French soul!

Three years earlier, as a writer who had no other responsibility than the impression made by his articles, Clemenceau had said that, in spite of our peaceful inclinations, the acceptance of certain demands constitutes a downfall to which one cannot be resigned without fighting.

What was he going to do? There was not a moment's hesitation. His duty was clear. The

interest of the country dictated it to him. We are within our rights. If we give up we shall have to give up always. France, henceforth, will be at the mercy of any caprice. If she is conquered, she has kept her honor intact up to the present. The defeat which they hope to inflict upon her without even the excuse of an unfortunate struggle will lower her irreparably. Sure that one cannot bend without a moral disaster, Clemenceau speaks and acts. Responsible for the destiny of the country, he does without hesitating what he had counseled as a journalist. He shows that his well thought-out articles and discourses are not mere phrases.

Many thoughtful men of strong character are alarmed and disapprove, and inclined toward a compromise which Germany would not refuse and which at least would save appearances. Is not war for two Prussian deserters going too far?

They come to see Clemenceau. They send emissaries to him. They chide him and warn him against his own temperament.

He knows that the German deserters are only a pretext to weaken us forever by a capitulation. He demonstrates it. He tries to have it understood



without always succeeding. Far from it! The most resolute begin to shake their heads.

Impassive, not worrying at seeing himself almost alone in his opinion, Clemenceau does not hesitate before this responsibility which, this time, can justly be called "frightful."

With the calmness which this hard fighter never possessed so much as when hours are critical, with a dignity joined to clear-sighted freedom of thought, he resists Germany.

The negotiations, immediately difficult, are carried on in his office. He by no means refuses to discuss and to turn the dispute in the direction of the law. The tribunal of The Hague could be seized if necessary, but with the reservation that one would not demand of France, as was intended, a preliminary humiliation.

Clemenceau is not uncompromising except on the question of our sovereignty. That is precisely the blow the enemy wants to deal us. Brutal, it rattles the sabre. Our Premier does not tremble nor is he afraid.

With frankness, with confidence, he explains the stakes of this battle and shows that our firmness,

ready for everything, is the sole chance for a happy solution. The press, interpreter of public opinion, is unanimous for resistance. The energy of Clemenceau need not be fortified, and yet when one speaks in the name of the country, one has more authority if conscious of the resolute tenseness of the press behind them. Already Clemenceau is supported by the nation.

To the German ambassador, who has instructions to intimidate our minister by threatening hidden meanings, he responds, without excitement, with words of reason. Wretched arguments for swashbucklers! Law makes very little impression on rascals who have come to trample on you. Therefore, they decided to rattle the saber in a still more terrifying manner.

In this case there is but one resource: to show that, strong in our right, we have no fear. Ironical and resolute, Clemenceau watches. He does not give way.

Then his Teutonic excellency decides on a plan which it is thought will bring France to her knees in panic.

"Mr. Premier," the ambassador says gravely, "if

complete satisfaction were not given to my Government, I would be forced by order of his Majesty, the Emperor, to ask for my passports."

"The express leaves for Cologne at nine o'clock, it is now seven," the Premier replied imperturbably after having consulted his watch. "Your Excellency, if you do not wish to miss the train you had better hurry!"

Very much disconcerted by the reply which plainly was not in the tone of the solemn conversation of chancellors' offices, and especially disconcerted by that sardonic impassivity which proved how much he had failed to make his point, the ambassador departed, but without having asked for his passports. The next day he came back, with less noise of the sabre about his civilian's trousers, to say that France's procedure was accepted.

It is possible that Germany had not yet resolved to draw the sword at that time. At any rate, we did not know. She neglected nothing to make us fear it. She was ready to rush at us. The dangers were great, but Clemenceau understood that firmness was our sole chance of safety. His energy preserved

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us perhaps from war, certainly from surrender. That day he earned the gratitude of France.

However, such a brilliant service did not keep him from being overthrown after three years of a government during which, as a patriot loving liberty and justice, he tried to put his acts into harmony with the ideas of his whole life.

He went out of office, a bigger man, popular, loved by the crowd, which was pleased by his energy, his jovial and witty good-fellowship, his picturesque independence. In its eyes he had the prestige of one "who is not like the others." He might have fallen from power. He did not fall in the esteem of the country which was glad to find in him his impulsive nature, good sense, good humor, honesty and courage, and even some of his faults, such as his hot-headedness, a bit too much satire and vehemence in criticism. But the Frenchman is temperamental.

When he was no longer minister, Clemenceau was not slow in perceiving the sacrifices which he had made to France in ceasing, for three years, to write in order to govern her.

Incapable of keeping still when colleagues, whom he esteemed, misrepresented his ideas, sometimes he could not resist the temptation of taking up for ten minutes his journalist pen in order to reestablish truth. Here was another scandal. What must be thought of a minister who departs so much from tradition as to carry on a discussion in the papers?

These were brilliant, mad outbursts, moreover. But when for almost twenty years one had been in the habit of writing every morning what he thinks it is pretty hard to stop. And why should Clemenceau give up speaking his mind on everything? Because he has been Premier? Not for a moment! Thus he continues. He takes up the battle, under a new form for his unchangeable ideas.

His *Homme Libre* is established. More keen and impetuous than ever, with the same fire in his heart, he defends the interests of France, and addresses himself with cleverness to the good sense of all. He appeals with emotion to the generous sentiments of the privileged class and to the reason of the people for a realization, without jolts, of the fraternal democratic ideal.

He lashes out at chimeras, and claws at political

expediency. Verbosity, even when brilliant, wears him out. He hates the phrases which do not act. He desires good sense, logic, freshness, a little confidence and boldness. When he finds only softness, sentimentality, lack of spirit, and fear of action, he reprimands and lashes. His spirit has never been younger. He has kept all his vigor of thought, and the unexpected quality of his incisive phrases which throw any defect or weakness into high relief.

Sometimes he goes too far and is mistaken. He knows it. "Who has not made mistakes?" he admitted recently with the same frankness toward himself as toward others. "I have made more than you think!"

Irritated by a sudden disagreement with certain men, it happens to him that he forgets momentarily their virtues and their services, and even long intimacy with them.

His irony is pitiless. He must say what he has in his heart; and with what picturesque and striking epigrams he says it. Fortunately, his reader, who knows his freshness and his impetuosity and who likes him for it, tones down the flourish.

There remain his watchful patriotism, his clear reason, the lofty idealism with which his sense of reality is ennobled.

Before and since the war some of his friends did not always share his opinions about certain men and acts and were even vexed at them; but knowing the value of his judgment, the trustworthiness of his information and his sincerity, they have always examined his reasons seriously and are always uneasy when they do not agree with him.

*L'Homme Libre* had only existed for a few months when the unbridled armaments of Germany left no more doubt in regard to her aggressive intentions. Clemenceau, who by his reading and his conversations with well-informed foreigners is well acquainted with the German state of mind, is not deceived. From year to year he has seen Pan-Germanism grow and make all Germany mad. He has seen greed and pride increase to excess in the people. How many pages bear witness to it! He sees that the Kaiser, restive under his bullying grandiloquence, will allow himself to be swept along.

The pacifist Clemenceau does not hesitate to-day

any more than yesterday. That threat banishes the beautiful dream of calm, human progress.

What difference does it make? We must protect ourselves from Germany.

First of all we must return to the three years' military service with a rapid increase in the means of defense. Heavy burdens? Greater inconvenience for young men? Another obstacle to the development of the nation?

What difference does it make? We must live. We must make every sacrifice in time to avoid new annexations, slavery, poverty.

Only a large army ready to cover the frontier can preserve us from the sudden crushing attack easily prepared by a government which believes in brute force and has the enthusiastic aid of the unanimous people, while the rest of the world remains in peace and silence.

Thus there must be a quick reinforcement of the heavy artillery; but it will take a year before this program, to be laid down and voted, can increase our security. All the more reason, therefore, to bar our frontiers with as many bayonets as possible.

Many of the political friends of Clemenceau



winned before this unpopular measure which bled the country of money and men. They did not see or they did not wish to see. Such a burden on the eve of election! And perhaps after all it was an imaginary danger which "reactionaries" were exaggerating. Then, trying to blind themselves by easy reasons, deaf to painful truth, they fretted and fumed.

What difference does it make? Clemenceau, who knows, who does not close his eyes to evidence, does not wish to incur the responsibility of a fatal weakness.

He cannot be accused of tenderness for Barthou's cabinet, which was brave enough to fight for this salutary law. He had treated Barthou rather harshly in other circumstances, although he liked him. But he does not hesitate to attack with his usual boldness some of his less brave friends.

Untiringly, and with an eloquence springing from his anxiety, he chides, he demonstrates, he appeals to the noblest sentiments and to the simplest instincts of self-protection. His voice is not suspected. It has never echoed with greater fervor.

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People listen to him. Thanks to him, "constituencies" are forgotten.

Clemenceau put his whole soul into a campaign admirable in its energy, its forceful argument and persuasive power. He sees that the life and future of France are at stake. Anxious, excited, tortured, he insists. His words resound like calls to arms. You feel his hopes vibrating in them, the emotion of his memories. He does not want Parliament to be enticed into hiding the peril from the nation. Without worrying about the discredit that faces him in certain political circles which are already hurling insults, he tries to warn France.

Once again she finds her own sentiments in this great voice. She becomes resigned to the heaviest and most grinding burdens as the only way to avoid still crueller sacrifices. The memory of her great history, the certainty of her moral value, her consciousness of the force which gives her lofty ideals, renews her energy.

That is what this old man who is always so young expresses with his eloquence and his emotion. In his thrilling articles the patriot, still bleeding from the wounds of 1870, recalls the miseries

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of the defeat and invasion, the murderous plundering brutality of Germany let loose. He makes one feel that this time in the murderous frenzy of her hatred, greed and pride, her attack will still be more devastating and it will be the end of France.

These are proud, resolute and tender pages in which, with filial piety, with the most delicate poetry, and with the firm accent of a warrior ready for everything in order to defend our homes, he evokes the grandeur of our past, our untiring, noble effort throughout the ages for the reign of justice, for the liberty of men, and nations, for the triumph of our ideal fraternalism.

They are warmly written pages, where, in the compelling lyricism of a man of action which is one of the characteristics of his style, he sings of our glory through the ages, the charm of our land of France, the delicate shadow of our sky, the gentleness of our manners and laws, the precision of our language, the beauty and enchantment of our civilization.

These are treasures for which we are accountable to future generations and which we must defend. Then soberly and with pathos, he begs the people

not to deny the evidence and close their eyes to the peril, in order not to take the painful measures which alone can avert it.

A practical statesman at the same time that he is a poet, he fights error with close argument and exact facts. He replies victoriously to all objections; he denounces the hypocrisy of false security. He deals harshly with the weakness and blindness of selfish office seekers.

The return to the three years' military service is voted. The Premier at that time was M. Louis Barthou, whose political reputation will rest on the fact that he was brave enough to make the necessary fight for this law and to keep up the struggle in spite of insults. Together with him, Clemenceau was the essential worker. How many progressive republicans rallied to his voice! Grateful France will not forget these accents in which she found again faith in herself and her wish to live.

In spite of other campaigns which did not please every one, Clemenceau was more popular than ever when war broke out.

As soon as he understood that its red specter,

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which he had feared to see so long, was rising over the world, he girded up his loins and threw himself into battle with all his strength.

The land of our ancestors, our history filled with blood and glory, the men and women of France, our peasants, our soldiers, their mothers, the French language and thought, inspired his keen and tender eloquence, and increased his strength for battle.

From the first day he is in the breach. With his burning words, he sustains courage. He cries out his gratitude. He tries to animate every one with his sacred flame.

Negligence, and lack of foresight, exasperated him. With what sadness he points them out! Too distrustful at the beginning, censorship cuts and suppresses his articles. He grows indignant over it. Do they not understand that he only wishes to serve, avoid waste, and fatal carelessness, to be on guard against fatuous foolishness, of certain preposterous, careless functionaries, whether they be military or civil? He wishes to spare us in these critical hours the revolt of mothers and wives who are angered by the scandal of slackers.

As they annoy him he attacks with more heat and

bitterness. As a protest he makes out of his *Homme Libre*, cut in two by the censor's scissors, *L'Homme Enchaîné* while awaiting better times, in which he continues to warn and reprimand.

It is a struggle of three years for France, which, in his tenderness for the resignation and heroism of Frenchmen, he wished so strongly to spare them useless sacrifices and the risks of disasters, too cruel after so much misery, anguish and grief.

When we have the feeling that his severity is too harsh toward certain men and sometimes feel sorry when we see him attack certain ideas, which, taken as a whole, are happy, we remain faithful to him because we can imagine his fear and his impatience.

From morning until evening he only thinks of the country and her salvation. He suffers from mistakes which might compromise the magnificent national outburst of heroism. He feels their danger. By pointing them out he would like to be able to save France from them or avoid their prolongation.

In such a vital crisis he knows the importance of an undecisive week or of a lost day. He sees

the dangers of negligence, the terrible consequences that a mistake might have that is persisted in.

Therefore his warning is sharp, sometimes even threatening. Clemenceau speaks strongly because he is in a hurry to be understood. In the haunting idea of salvation, he attacks with a virulence that may seem excessive men whose ideas are not in accord with him.

This severity finds its justification in its cause so worthy of respect. Can a company of soldiers which is threatened complain because the sentinel cries out his warning too loudly?

He was president of the Commission of External Affairs and the Senate, and later of the Commission of the Army, when M. de Freycinet, former member of the National Defense of 1871, became for the time being Minister of State in Briand's cabinet. In this capacity M. Clemenceau played a useful rôle in the speeding up of the armaments and tried to make his sure knowledge and his well-tried clear-sightedness of use in a happier conduct of the war.

Every one who is well informed renders full

justice to the work, to the discernment and to the useful influence of these two commissions. A patriotic policy always animated their ability and their good will. Clemenceau inspired them through his faith, his good sense, his logic, the power of his mind; and his capacity for work did wonders.

Never allowing himself to be duped by unsound reasons and always battling against their stubbornness, with what firmness he shook them out of routine, apathy and slowness!

War had surprised us, pretty badly equipped against the formidable means of aggression which Germany had accumulated. In July, 1914, two weeks before the cataclysm, he had cried with anguish from the tribune of the senate: "Beware!" The program for the manufacture of munitions, voted in the spring of 1914, could only be partially realized at the end of several months. Therefore it was necessary to improvise while the battle was going on more rapid and complete programs and more efficacious.

The minister of war at that time was M. Millerand, who deserves praise for having kept his calmness in tragic hours, and who, on the morrow



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of the first victory of the Marne, mobilized with great resoluteness French industry, which had been for the most part driven out of its shops by the invasion. He found in the commission of the army, in the senate, a watchful and powerful aid.

The effort of his successors was not less sustained, pursuant to the prospects of a long struggle.

The influence of M. Clemenceau at the head of the Commission of External Affairs was just as salutary. He knew history well and was supplementing his knowledge constantly by a study which was serious and without preconceived notions of all modern questions. He received many visitors of considerable note, and, knowing how to make them talk, he brought into the debate over which he presided very precious information, which his clear-sightedness illuminated.

He made the political world appreciate the advantage of not being an ignoramus.

Then his attention is called little by little, by courageous writers, to the adroit maneuver of the Germans to separate us, to make our weapons fall from our hands, and to weaken before victory our effort for defense.

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He observes. He gets information. He reasons. What he discovers makes him indignant and frightens him. He discovers men who are selling France for money. There are others who, by the weakness and carelessness of profiteers, favor their designs by giving them the means to betray. There are those who are doing a disservice to the country, a whole insolent band, master of the power that is terrorizing, in the pay of Germany and at the service of the guilty plot, is demoralizing the rear of the army, inciting soldiers to revolt, leading us imperceptibly, by blackmail, threat and insult, to a defeatist peace which will be the death of France.

Then one Sunday in July, 1917, restraining his heart aroused by so much ignominy, the old patriot cries out to the French people what was being done with its heroism, with its resignation, with its spirit of sacrifice!

With all the authority that he has, he, the witness of our grief, and of our efforts to build up the ruins, smashed it.

The sentinel was watching. He uttered the cry of alarm in time. The whole of France acclaims him.

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France recalls his acts, his speeches, his articles, his constant appeal during forty-seven years. In these tragic hours she has faith in him. She feels that in such a crisis, together with his lofty and rare qualities, his faults themselves can serve us.

Tired of party coalitions, of eloquence which does not act, or of haggard weakness that stammers, of selfish ability, boiling under a closed lid, France wants him in power.

A good Frenchman, M. Raymond Poincaré, President of the Republic, a big enough man not to remember in such a peril the stings of former years, calls him to power. And Clemenceau, for the sake of the work of salvation which must unite these two statesmen, rushed with outstretched hand to the hand stretched out to him. This forgetfulness of themselves in the time of danger of the country will redound to their honor.

In spite of this almost unanimous swing of opinion, what a risk and what a trial power is in such circumstances for a man who had had the attitude of M. Clemenceau!

His criticism was severe. Thinking only of France, he knew neither friends nor enemies. He

spared no one. Of how many choices and decisions he disapproved! How many methods have incurred his censure! Having shown himself harsh, he must foresee the harshness of others. They are waiting for his measures. There is no Government more difficult than his. The situation that results from uncertainty, from the conduct of the war, renders the task still more thankless.

Resolutely he takes the helm in his hands. He is strong in the confidence which the country places in him. He profits by the unfortunate experiences which he has had. He will not allow mistakes from which he has suffered to be made again.

Above all, he thinks only of the war. He carries it on with the wild energy of a man who does not want his country to die. Having no other ambition than to save all that he loves, he has the pure and stoical faith of a member of the Convention defending Liberty. Sole survivor of a generation of men who have disappeared, inconsolable because they were not able to reëstablish violated Rights, he makes it a matter of honor to realize their hope.

Behold him standing at the helm in the tempest! His sharp, calm eyes so intensely black in his white

face, watch through the deep, foaming waves for the reefs and mines. He is wet by the spray. But staunch under his little soft hat, with a turned down brim, a hat which has become the legend of the battle-field, he stands firm.

Energetic, he tolerates only energy. Full of confidence, he wants others to be confident. Under the hardest blows of the sea, master of himself, humorous and sardonic, he raises a laugh by his picturesque jokes which heartens the struggling crew.

Then suddenly what words he speaks, simply and profoundly human, of a controlled emotion, which bring tears to the hardest eye!

In power once more he remains faithful to his unchangeable ideas.

Suppressing political censorship, he bares himself to blows. Although certain of his friends blame him for it, his respect for liberty goes so far that he tolerates articles dangerous for national unity.

Finally, as painful as this thankless part of a great task may be for him, he lets the hand of justice descend pitilessly on the crimes, the weak-

nesses, and the mistakes of which, as a senator and journalist, he denounced the peril.

He sacrifices everything for the safety of his country except his principles of an unregenerate liberal.

He always had a horror of useless verbiage, but more than ever in this cataclysm in which all forces must be tense for action. He knows that we are the dupes of words and that we die of them. Therefore this great orator, sure of success as soon as he speaks, has a power and a will for silence from which nothing will make him depart. Insistent teasing makes him on the contrary only more dumb.

He only mounts on the tribune when he has something to say and at the moment that he is chosen.

Then he speaks wonderfully to France the language which his love of France inspires in him and which, in her instinct of conservation, in her noble idealism and her clear feeling for the real, she would like to be able to speak to herself.

Not only does he assemble our forces and make war, but with a serene indifference for politics he does nothing but make war. He *knows* war. He

knows its political conduct, its resources in men and material, for this is his especial field. He is precisely informed on all details and has the figures in his memory. Let one of the most meticulous members of the Commission ask him about different stores of supplies and the state of our military strength, he replies with exact figures. His trustworthy information and memory are highly valuable for the conception of possible enterprises and his judgment concerning those suggested to him.

He was surrounded by civilians and soldiers who were active collaborators, reserved and sparing of words; and they protected him from useless annoyance and idle talk. He was able to study affairs as a man who knows how to work. He is constructive. His ability to think clearly prevents any news, grave as it may be, from obscuring his vision or exciting him.

Since the habit of procrastination appears to him, especially in war times, to be a harmful weakness, he never goes to sleep at night having put off until to-morrow the decisions he must make. He does not leave his desk without having reflected and studied until the solution of the problem is found.

No one is ignorant of the prestige in the eyes of the allies which the complete mastery of himself, his power over men, his good sense and wide knowledge, give him.

Just and frank, but with a perfect courtesy in his happy and witty frankness, he is listened to with the most cordial sympathy in the allies' councils. The light of his mind shines there. He is both powerful and persuasive.

Every one knows the personal influence which he had, on a grave day, for the acceptance by all the nations of the principles of a supreme command of the armies; at other times, the influence he exercised in putting through helpful measures. History will tell us later of these striking details.

It is sufficient now to know how much the ministers and generals of the Entente, at difficult times, liked his clear judgment, his justice, his uprightness, his simple "gentlemanliness" and his pleasing humor.

Just as he does not like to be influenced by intrigues and teasing from within, so he does not wish to be moved by sharp practice from without.

Count Czernin, Austrian prime minister, at the



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same time impudent and ridiculous, collapsed under the straight-from-the-shoulder blow which Clemenceau delivered to him in the prompt reply: "Count Czernin lied."

And the Chancellors' offices will remember for many a day the vigor with which the imperial backing was lashed by the phrase: "There are some consciences which are rotten!"

When the expressive words resounded, there were among us timid men who regretted this resolute hitting from the shoulder. "What a mistake!" they wailed. But partisan spirit is responsible for many other mistakes.

○Six months have passed since these two memorable boxing bouts. Now that one sees by the experience at Brest-Litovsk, where parleying with the knavery of the Central Powers leads as long as they are not defeated, one understands better that these straight blows, so beautifully landed, preserved us from a wasp's nest of dangerous negotiations. This well-directed blow, given so opportunely, was a diplomatic victory.

He considers very carefully his most energetic acts. He understands all the phases, all the tangled

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interests of the war towards which he has exerted all his force of mind for four years. Animating every one by his energy and his faith, himself sustained by the soul of the Nation, which recognizes itself in his old heart, he is on the way toward the realization of the hope which has illuminated his whole life.

The liberation of the country is his reward.

### III

#### THE MAN

**M**USCULAR, vigorous, alert, with his broad brow concealing sharp black eyes, with his resolute carriage and energetic movements, this Vendean is the descendant of a strong race.

After a life of uninterrupted labor which was tormented by political struggles, persecutions and prison, his father died about twelve years ago almost ninety years of age.

Passionately curious about ideas, attentive to the efforts and creations of modern thoughts in all fields, never tiring of intercourse with lofty minds of all epochs, he absorbed with the same animation pages of yesterday and pages of to-day.

Shut up among his books, indifferent to the pettiness and ugliness of life, which his wise old philosophy did not wish to see, he read, meditated, and pondered over ideas, deeds and men.

This ancestor of his with his active brain was

a noble figure; and, faithful toward himself, confident of the future, he thought until he drew his last breath. Gustave Geffroy, during his stay in the Vendean country, talked much with this old man who loved youth and conversation, and, without naming him, reproduced an unforgettable representation of him in an interesting novel.

His physical activity was surprising almost up to the time of his death. The father of M. Clemenceau rested from his reading by taking long walks which were conducive to meditation. He loved nature and men more than books, in which he sought especially, in fiction as well as in history, stirring representations of nature and humanity.

With his stick in his hand, he walked daily in the country. He was cordial with the people and interested in all agricultural affairs. He loved the familiar landscape.

With his strength of oak, he cared little for bad weather and, many a time even in his extreme old age, when he was surprised by a sudden shower, he simply came back to a blazing fire and dried himself.

His stubborn and bantering indifference did not

permit complicated precautions. Do we not recognize his ways and his moods in his son when, in the first line trenches, he obstinately refused to take care of himself?

Six children blessed the industrious, useful, worthy life of the father of M. Clemenceau. Our Premier arrived second in this family. He owes respect to a sister a few years older whose faculties age has not dimmed. The moral and physical strength of the other children is well known.

No one is more given over to tradition than this family of "revolutionists." For more than three hundred years they have been doctors, and with honor, for one of our kings ennobled one of the distant ancestors. Without doubt his majesty did not foresee the famous coalition of the Socialists.

In addition to the arms which he forges untiringly for France, Clemenceau has weapons which do not seem to have made much impression on him or his father. Thus it was not to justify them that he became a doctor.

This old tradition stops with him. His son, M. Michel Clemenceau, a captain of colonial troops who first entered Saint Mihiel at the head of his

company, is a chemical engineer. But cannot tradition, interrupted once during three centuries, be renewed?

Our future minister of National Defense passed the vacations of his youth in the village of Mouilleron-en-Pareds (Vendée), the cradle of his maternal ancestors where his mother, faithful to another tradition, came at the time of his birth.

He was a student at the Lycée of Nantes, where his father was practicing his profession. Later he became a student at Paris. During the summer he played and hunted with the young country boys, was happy in his absolute liberty in the fields and woods. Intoxicated with light and air, he acquired the love of nature, which is felt in all his works. He got to know men and the art of talking to them familiarly, cordially and with dignity. He acquired this love for the earth and this respect for the persistent work of the peasant, which was, as we shall see, one of the elements of his patriotism.

This healthy, rude life in the country strengthened him morally and physically and offered peaceful moments of repose during the squalls of his political life. A whole side of this character of Clemenceau

would escape us if we lost sight of the influence on him of his native land and of the labor of the peasants.

In this man of the city, of Parliament, of journals and books, there has remained through all the excitements and struggles a touch of the country gentleman. That is the reason he is able to be understood by the peasant soldiers. He talks to them in the trenches with the same familiar ease that he would at the turn of a deep road of Vendée.

He has their good sense and their sense of reality; and in the spontaneousness of his sallies of wit and quickness of his repartees he has their bantering outlook, their patience and tenacity, and, when it suits them, their formidable capacity for silence.

One day one of his friends who was not yet hardened to calumny and was trembling with indignation at some foolish lying remarks, told him he intended to reply and to send a challenge for a duel. Clemenceau smiled with contempt for such odious polemics; and, convinced that an honest man who is sure of his conscience ought not to waste his life on such trifles, irritating to-day but effaced by

truth to-morrow, said: "Who is slandered more than I am? Do I reply? I wait!"

Because of the swiftness of his thought and the picturesque vivacity of expression some people believe him to be impulsive and incapable of controlling his changing humor flaming with anger or dangerous joke.

This is a mistake. Sovereign calmness hides under his jovial and brilliant petulance. One cannot imagine the degree of calmness which Clemenceau can attain. He never is so much master of himself as in the gravest moments when, in the midst of the obstacles and dangers, he makes a decision.

Thus like all real men of action, Clemenceau only appears nervous when, seeing the peril and not having the means to ward it off, he suffers at not being able to act. But when he has the possibility of fighting it and of making his ideas prevail, of joining in the work of salvation, he is immediately wonderful in his lucid calmness.

At no time have his intimate collaborators, who really know his character, been mistaken in it. The



often recognized sign of battle in his placid gravity, his appearance and his movements, even his gayest playfulness, which reveals a great freedom of mind, is blended with his greatest anxiety.

We shall not go so far as to say with a certain man given to paradox, who, looking at him carefully, remarked: "Clemenceau is joyfully serene to-night. Things are not going well!" But it is true that, with his perfect control over himself, he is never so calm as at the moment when he has to be.

Therefore, in this war in which the life of France is at stake, since he has the responsibility of the gigantic struggle and can act, he astonishes those who do not know him well by his thoughtful gravity and calm.

He is master of himself enough to be able to measure out his violence, note its effect, and stop it at the right moment. What a nervous force he holds in check for the sake of clear reasoning!

Men who have not been able to make themselves heard declare, with a look of fear, that he does not know how to listen. This is another mistake. Clemenceau receives eagerly everything brought to

him. At the same time that he is scrutinizing his visitor he stores up his words, he reflects and discusses them in his own mind even when he does not discuss them with his opponent.

Yes, indeed, he listens. And how? With what power of absorption, with what a keen, critical sense! But he does so only if he is interested, if the person who is talking does not appear foolish, confused, harebrained.

Since he hates to lose his time and has a horror of confused wordiness, of dreaming, disordered minds, of blunderers and fools, there are persons of great importance and of high rank to whom he listens no more after two minutes of their rambling talk and whom no human power will force him to hear again.

Having received this rap over the knuckles, these men are naturally the ones who reproach him and who give him the reputation of not getting information or opinions.

He gets information, certainly, but only from those who know. He gets opinions, but only from those who think.

Watch him at loggerheads with men who, on the

contrary, are sober and clear in their exposition of the subject and are bringing him sure information or an interesting idea. After having looked into their eyes and listened with calmness and in impressive silence to their words, he sums up in a few words the objections that he believes to be valid.

He discusses as long as he believes he is right, or until he has brought forth arguments so strong that his opposition is strengthened. Then he keeps silent. And his collaborators know what this silence means. It is useless to insist in a last charge. The case is heard.

Then come a few hours more of consideration to see if really he can find nothing against the argument that he is on the point of adopting. Then very simply, with the good faith which is characteristic of him, he makes it his own because he considers it the best henceforth.

It is not only when they bring him an interesting view that he takes the opinion of others into consideration. He knows how to listen when before a public debate or a decision to be made, he wishes to test his ideas beforehand.

He fences so that he will be opposed. He pro-

vokes counter attacks. He tries his strength. It is curious cerebral gymnastics after long mental control. It is a practice stroke before the game.

These are trial games which, with partners well chosen, permit him to discern better the strength and the weakness of his argument. And this is also a proof of his fairmindedness.

Another peculiarity of his character is, after the examination of a difficult affair or consideration concerning some ticklish debate, the clear-sightedness in which he selects the essential point upon which he must insist, and also the weak point where the adverse attack may well strike, and which it will be necessary to defend with the greatest energy. Then he fortifies it and masses his reserves there.

This is an excellent habit of mind always, but how much more precious when one is at war and when one must expect the most unforeseen offensive, such as sham peaces, offers of armistices and parleys, campaigns kept up behind the lines. One likes to feel himself led by a chief who knows where to place his gabions and at what propitious moment to unmask his machine guns.

This timeliness of M. Clemenceau is very for-

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tunate and is always the fruit of long deliberation with himself. Nothing can distract him even when he seems to be thinking of something else from the intense application of his mind, with which he falls to the study of a problem, until the best solution and the surest means of obtaining it appear to him. As remarkable as his faculty of improvisation, he is not one of those who trusts to chance. He has the clear and foreseeing brain of a leader.

This serious study of facts and these long, profound reflections, are set off by his roguish joviality.

Behold him in his own home, in his modest ground-floor apartment in the rue Franklin where he has lived for twenty-five years. He works at his table shaped like a horse-shoe, suitable for the display of the many different official documents with which he is occupied at the same time. Or see him in his minister's cabinet, formerly at the Department of the Interior, now at the Department of War. The cares which assail him, the constant stream of people, news which sweeps in like waves from the whole world, the sudden appearance of his ministers, of generals, of diplomats, the secret ar-

rival of his intimate aides, the different combinations which he follows through everything, nothing alters his calm and his lucidity of mind.

Motionless but looking straight at his interlocutors, he suddenly becomes animated if the communication interests him.

Then, while listening or while answering, with lively gestures sometimes he claps upon his powerful skull, now pretty bald, his inseparable cap with earlaps, made of soft wool in the winter, of silk during the summer, a hunter's cap which, like his little soft hat, is a part of his legendary appearance. Sometimes he takes it off to put it on again soon with a light tap, keeping up the discussion all the time.

A headdress worn in this fashion does not give to its owner the air of an old man, I beg you to believe.

It is a headdress which in the course of the conversation does not remain long in repose and which all the Prime Ministers and military chiefs of the Entente must have seen rise and fall on this expressive, dominating face.

Or, behold Clemenceau pass, his step alert, reso-

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lute, in spite of his years, his hat a bit cocked over his ear, his sardonic face, his cane over his shoulder.

He has always been known for this carriage of his head and his gait. Kept young by horse-back riding and fencing, he remained for a long time supple and slender. Age has given him a little embonpoint without weighing him down. He walks less quickly, perhaps, but still with great precision and sprightliness.

He is not, he never will be, an old pussy-footing parliamentarian. He never turns his shoulders sideways, but walks straight along in crowds. Above these square shoulders observe this battering mien, this mouth ready, under the white mane of his moustache, for a sly joke, this merry and attentive look. Listen to this vivacious voice, at times a bit dry and yet very warm, harmonious and of a timbre which stirs.

Above all, follow his logical, persuasive, close demonstration, so full of new and vast ideas, in which gleams his feeling for the real.

Ah, no! Old age has not yet laid its hand upon this vigorous man of seventy-eight years, with his clear thought and energetic look.

He has examined everything within himself. He knows where he is going, what he wants, and how to increase his chances of getting it.

Then he jokes, he jollies, he disconcerts and enchants people by his picturesque, pithy sayings, by his expressive phrases, and by his humor. One does not find him dull even in his gravest moments.

Blunders exasperate him. Solemn stupidity, dotting upon itself, adds some gayety to his irritation. The extravagances of certain pretentious hare-brained persons mix joy with his amazement. The human animal, whatever it may be, always diverts and interests him. And tranquilly, with an amused look, he watches the comedy of the world. But he is not stingy toward the human animal with his cutting jokes. What barbed shafts, always with good humor, he fires at it!

With a light paw and with a smile, he toys with the lack of good sense and logic, with weakness and fear, with incoherence he passes by, cordial, jocose, bantering. And he leaves behind him a wake of striking jokes and prolonged laughter. They resound still there where he was, while his spirit has awakened other laughter.



Everywhere he appears the conversation becomes animated and its tone rises. In the corridors of the Senate and in the Chambers of the Deputies the usual banal, stupid gossip is being carried on. Clemenceau arrives hiding so many serious thoughts under his joviality, immediately by his radiance and by the inspiration of his presence, he shakes every one out of his torpor and forces them to come out of their dullness. Faces light up, gestures become more lively, clever ideas and brilliant repartee flash back and forth. The fire-works begin, gay wit sparkles, the charm of his mind has worked. Around Clemenceau no one can be sad or dull. The stupid get away as from too hot a fire.

On certain days his radiant vitality and his energy accomplish wonders. He awakens in his steps confidence and hope.

Here is a simple example: On the second day of the great offensive in March against the British troops, at the moment that the German flood was submerging everything in front of it and, through a formidable break in the line, was rolling towards Paris, with a heavy heart under the impassive air which must be kept in such hours, in my haste to

have news less bad, I entered the Palais Bourbon where sometimes information, not yet printed, circulates.

The atmosphere was lugubrious. No favorable rumor. Dismayed faces, shakings of the head and the manner of people who are expecting the worst. Except for certain deputies and journalists who, controlling their anxiety, were standing their ground, how few among the best were showing souls sufficiently steadfast. This ant hill above which too many black moths were flying was scarcely reassuring. After having tried to react against this uneasiness by taking an air of calm confidence, I hurried elsewhere to breathe. On the threshold I encounter a friend who, like me, was happy to get away. We talk.

"Clemenceau has not come?" I asked him.

"No," he replied. "He has been away at the front all day."

"It is plain that they are having a bit of a hurricane."

The next day, impelled by the same desire for quicker news, I enter there as I go elsewhere. Nothing more favorable. The break has rather been

enlarged. The onrush of the waves continues to shake everything. There is really no reason why the same faces should not have the same expressions of sadness and apprehension. Yet I find them transformed. Their eyes are clearer, their demeanor is more proud and more resolute. The words that one hears are more confident. The atmosphere is better. I ask questions.

Clemenceau has just passed by. He has reanimated hope. His ardor has warmed everybody. It is wonderful that an old heart has so much youth.

And then the soul of France is in him.

How has M. Clemenceau been able to maintain his strength and youth while accomplishing this formidable labor as a writer and carrying on his uninterrupted political activity?

It is because, being a furious worker and a soldier, careful to conserve his spirit for the battle, he has always kept up his vigor by a rigorous hygiene. Moreover, are not work and struggles pleasures which are the least fatiguing?

Clemenceau does not smoke, eats little, scarcely drinks anything but water. Until about 1890 he

was a constant attendant at first representations of plays of a social or literary value. For some thirty years, except for very rare occasions, as for example a dinner at the home of intimate friends where he hopes to have an agreeable give-and-take of ideas, he does not go away from home at night and goes to bed very early.

It is true that he gets up regularly at three o'clock every morning, and sometimes even earlier. Not having need of a long sleep, he is not far from believing that sleep is a prejudice. Courageous people, quite snobbish that they have gotten up at six o'clock, and the workmen who are getting to their work at the same hour, and in whose eyes he is nothing except a bourgeois profiteer, do not suspect that at this moment, if he is minister, he has already studied two or three dossiers and if he is become a journalist again has written his article. And what an article! Substantial, full of ideas and facts, of well arranged arguments, incisive, brilliant and with sudden, lofty flight.

In order to furnish him with the latest news of the evening the secretary has them sent by messenger to his home. They are slipped under the

doormat where Clemenceau knows that he will find them. But how often in his haste to know of the events and to get to work, thinking that he has slept too long, the industrious and impetuous old man comes to lift up the mat before the messenger has brought the dispatches for him to devour!

This famous old statesman comes every night to look under the door mat for the news of some event which he can interpret in the light of his knowledge of life and men, for the instruction of his contemporaries. It seems to me that this spectacle is not without a touch of grandeur.

Then, when the precious envelope has appeared, for three or four hours he enjoys the delight of a hard battle, in solitude, until the illuminating idea springs forth and he hits upon his stirring phrases.

After that, he indulges in a half hour's gymnastic exercise which keeps up the vigorous suppleness of his muscles and insures, through a perfect circulation of blood, the calm lucidity of his mind.

At eight o'clock the first visitors, to whom morning appointments were given, present themselves. Busy men cannot avoid crowding their days except by being methodical. Thus Clemenceau, exact and

precise like all great workers, does not keep people waiting. Try to arrange three or four appointments, one of which will be with Clemenceau, and I am sure that if he foresees you have an interesting communication to make you will get an appointment with him first.

As courteous as he is punctual, as a general rule he keeps his correspondence up to date. What a lesson this is for certain ill-mannered, negligent people who think they can afford to be geniuses by never deigning to reply. This glorious old man, in spite of his busy life, does not wish to do to others what he would not wish to have done to himself. So he takes the trouble to acknowledge, by a note, the receipt of the smallest book sent to him. God and his concierge know how his door is bombarded with them.

This stream of visitors, which renews his information and gives him food for thought at the same time that it gives him the means of a more efficient control of affairs, always leaves time to study several dossiers.

Immediately after his breakfast, which is a rapid formality in order not to disoblige his cook, comes

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his departure for the Senate. Without neglecting its deliberations or the lobbying, too fully informed in regard to affairs under consideration, he presides over either the Commission of the Army or the Commission of External Affairs and leads the interrogation of the ministers with vigor and without allowing any concealment of the real state of affairs.

Then he goes to his editorial office, where he is glad to talk intimately with his co-editors or with friends who chance to come. He is too full of life not to like to have life around him. He goes there every evening. But if you wish to find him in good humor, be careful not to present yourself before him before he has read the afternoon editions and revised his morning article according to the impressions of the day. Otherwise, no matter how much of a friend of his you may be, you will only find an impatient man sweeping his eyes over the evening papers while he listens to you and furious at not being able to read better and listen to you more tranquilly. A half-hour later, when his article is corrected and the papers are read, he becomes the gayest of talkers.

It is the same program at the Ministry. There is

this difference that the revision of his article is replaced by the careful and minute study of affairs, whether the morning is passed in the rue Saint Dominique instead of at home and whether there passes through his office a great number of summoned visitors such as ministers, members of Parliament, generals, ambassadors, public officials, journalists. At three o'clock the stream of visitors begins again, made pleasant by inevitable interruptions of rapid talks in regard to dispatches and decisions to be made. This continues until Clemenceau locks himself in to work with his colleagues who, summing up affairs in a few precise phrases, know how his brain works.

There are often private interviews with the President of the Republic, whom Clemenceau keeps informed of everything. Once a week he meets with the Council of Ministers, which, since the war, has held constant meetings in which harangues were kept up for hours. From time to time he makes a visit to the Senate or the Chamber of Deputies when he thinks that his presence can be useful or when he has something to say; but he refuses to waste time in the corridors in order to foil plots.



Moreover, he has so much to do and the phases of the struggle demand such close application that he becomes more and more sparing of his words and time.

He always had a horror of superfluous verbiage; and even during his first presidency of the Council, which he spent at the Ministry of the Interior, his busy life forced him to demand great brevity and to avoid useless conversation.

One day he was terribly beset and overtaxed. One of his prefects, who was short of money, insisted on being received, and at the moment when the minister was showing a visitor out he made a last effort through the half-opened door.

"One word!" begged the prefect, who was really in need of very prompt assistance.

"All right; but only one!" Clemenceau replied imperiously.

"Dough!" implored the official who was suddenly inspired by necessity.

Then, disarmed and diverted, the minister had him enter and the two men talked it over.

Another time one of his most faithful friends

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who in normal times he takes the greatest pleasure in seeing, comes into his office at a rush-hour.

"What do you want?" he cries out hastily, extending his hand.

"Simply shake hands," the friend explains.

"It's done!" Clemenceau replies brusquely but affably. "Now get out!"

Then, without a smile for his visitor, he goes back to work.

What are his recreations? Since he has been carrying on the war, they are frequent visits to the front in the invigorating atmosphere in which his soldier's heart is at home. In time of peace, his books, with which every room in his apartment is furnished from top to bottom. There are pictures by artists whose talent harmonizes with his love of truth and life. There are walks, for he loves trees, water, the great spectacles of the streets, and hunting, which is an excuse for moving about in the deep peace of the fields and woods.

Finally, he loves animals. He likes to have them around him constantly and watch them. Their beauty charms him. Their peacefulness calms him.

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He likes their colors, their forms, their life. Dogs are his preferred companions. Their joyous, intelligent, docile fidelity is a pleasure to him. In their instinct, sharpened by the relations and conversations one has with them, he finds more wisdom, kindness and uprightness than in the strange soul of some men.

He always has beautiful dogs of all kinds about him. They are his familiar companions who never enervate him and whom he never scolds. It is not uncommon to see the watchful face of one of them through the window of his automobile. During his first premiership his favorite, a magnificent English dog, stretched out luxuriously in front of the flaming logs in his office, received his guests with him. After certain trying interviews with narrow, stubborn people, how many times he must have turned towards his dog and wondered at his good sense!

This friend of trees and beautiful gardens suffered to see the park of the ministerial residence lifeless and deserted. One would have said it was the park of the Sleeping Beauty and that after a hundred years of silence there was nothing in it except emptiness and motionlessness. Tired of

seeing nothing move except the water with which the gardener watered the lawns, he had the idea of stocking it with animals. He put peacocks and swans into it; and, while he worked and listened to his visitors, he looked at the majestic walk, the impressive immobility and the shaded plumage of the birds.

This was a fine scandal. The employees of the Ministry were shocked at this unusual fancy. The inhabitants of the faubourg Saint-Honoré, furious to hear the monotonous call of the peacock night and day, complained repeatedly to the chief of police. A long and memorable battle of ambushes and cruel cunning ensued. One of the swans was poisoned. The chief of police was on the eve of being forced to summon his recalcitrant minister. Finally, so the story goes, in order to be able to look at the colorful splendor of the peacocks, M. Clemenceau had to resign himself to the removal of their vocal cords.

If it is true it is to be feared that on that day our Premier may have jolted the people who unfortunately laid themselves open to his blows.

He had less trouble with his love for the works

of art. He soon became a collector of Japanese curios and his interest in Nippon was another bond between him and Edmond de Goncourt. For a long time in his former apartments an expressive Japanese mask indicated his door to visitors.

His portrait has been painted by Edouard Manet, whose sincere talent he liked while still very young; also by J.-F. Raffaëlli, who represented him in all the energy of his oratory, in the masterpiece of life and truth now in the Luxembourg; finally by Carrière, whose intelligence and profoundly human art pleased him. Busts have been made of him by Rodin, with whose genius he was familiar, and lately by the excellent sculptor, Sicard. Clemenceau respects too much the free interpretation of an artist to ever be astonished at the interpretations they gave of him.

Finally, without disappointment or weariness, he reposes from his battles and his immense labor by contemplating with an eye sensitive to plastic beauty a few pictures by his friends, in which he finds a bit of nature that he loves so much, and a little humanity and life which he always tries to understand better.

## IV

### FUNDAMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

**R**EASON, first of all, his good sense, strong logic of his mind, these are the essential traits of this great figure on which we have insisted in passing. The brain of this rationalist is the clear and vigorous brain of France. But M. Clemenceau never loses himself in abstraction. He is a strong idealist, a man of principles. And he has always shown himself thus with the faith and fervor of an apostle. He has also a very keen sense of the real, an inborn virtue which an experience of life has greatly developed.

He is not one of those who become intoxicated with words and imagine a world conforming to their dream and their hope.

He believes in the force of ideas and enjoys with a critical mind, which is always wide awake, their animating nobility; but he does not wish to be the dupe or slave of even very seductive phrases when

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they have not a very intimate relationship to reality. A man who fights daily for a little more of liberty, of justice, and of happiness, he defends himself against the paradise of too positive doctrines. He mistrusts enchanting mirages, which make the vulgar crowd exacting and discourage it from effort.

He has perhaps more horror of dreams than of empiricism. Winged dreams intoxicate, empiricism, sprawled in the mud of low interests and of personal gratification, degrades. He likes lofty flights, but on the condition of never losing from view the nutritive earth and men who painfully dispute the right to live.

He keeps his eyes fixed upon the future, for which each one is somewhat responsible since each one of us makes some of it by his acts and his thoughts. He occupies himself with the present hour and exerts all his forces against the perils, the harshness and the injustice of the epoch in which we live. He struggles against the immediate obstacles which one can hope to break down by using force. He does not think one has the right to evade

this imperious and thankless duty by uttering eloquent harangues about the rosy future.

Is this not the secret of his long oratorical duel with Jaurès, for whose great honesty he always had the highest esteem and who in his spirit of justice and his sense for the value of things always returned his esteem! In June, 1896, when M. Clemenceau was still only Minister of the Interior in the cabinet of M. Sarrián, whom he was soon to replace, I remember having been present at the famous three days' contest of these two men who are so dissimilar.

In listening to his very carefully studied discourse, of which the very important passages were very plainly written out, as was that of Jaurès moreover, but which was constantly animated by brilliant, clever and fitting repartee, I said to myself that one could sum it up thus:

"You are prophesying on the heights! You are living in the future! You are making ideal constructions for the future without considering the present. I, too, think of the morrow, but through to-day! And, with ax in hand, destroying the obstacles, I try to make for humanity a freer road,



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where its flesh and heart will bleed less in order to bring it nearer to better times."

Love of justice is another characteristic of this existence. It contributes to establish the unity of his life.

Political justice. Social justice. In a word, justice.

Clemenceau has sacrificed most to it. He has fought for it ardently, in all its forms, in every epoch. In summing up the policy and work of M. Clemenceau we have recalled the important incidents of this long struggle of sixty years for justice. It is sufficient to add that in all the stages of his life, the former deputy from Montmartre, who had come to take up his existence in the midst of industrial workers, has never ceased to give thought to them.

Let one re-read all his discourses, which are generally documents of bold generosity, all his articles and all the pages of his books, one will see that this is his constant preoccupation. He wants their work to be better paid, to be in conditions more favorable to safety and health. He desires benevolent and intelligent justice, less physical exhaustion, a better

lot for them with greater possibilities for liberation. And the uplifting of the people together with their education is one of his cares.

Therefore, finding the reproach unjust and absolutely comical on the part of certain men who, without having more callous hands than M. Clemenceau, institute and proclaim themselves the sole defenders of the people, he shrugs his shoulders.

He does not recognize their right to do so. This preposterous pretension riles him and makes him smile at the same time.

One would neglect one of the essential traits of his character if one did not bring out his love of liberty. For him it is a religion. He is the believer and the apostle of it. He is convinced of its beneficence even with its excesses and its risks.

Without it, there is no dignity for nations any more than individuals. There is no better guarantee of the social order. It is the safety valve which prevents explosions. It alone can prevent violence. He sees in it the very condition of human progress.

Therefore, it is necessary to have patience with

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it. Wisdom demands it. Only let us try to accustom men to liberty. They enjoy it for such a short time. Is it not natural that, intoxicated, they should have a tendency to abuse it? Then with patience, with confidence, let us show them its dangers. For the good, a thousand times greater than the evil, let us know how to resign ourselves to the inevitable bad consequences of mistakes committed in its name. Liberty is noble and salutary. Liberty is holy. Do not raise your hand against her! Do not touch her even if you are unjustly her victim.

As a minister he respects her. As head of the national government he does not feel the right of giving up military and diplomatic censorship which is necessary against indiscretions directly dangerous to our defense; he does not allow, in spite of the patriotic apprehension of some of his friends, political censorship, which raged so furiously during the first three years of the war, to be established. And yet, like a good many alarmed republicans, he takes notice of the extravagant abuse that certain men make of this liberty and of the unfortunate influences it might have on the moral forces of a nation at war, and on our defensive power. Liberty

for him is a doctrine. He received it from his ancestors of 1789 and 1848. Personally he will never lay hands on it; while he lives no one will lay hands on it without a protest from him.

Therefore, invariably, in all its forms, in all circumstances, he has defended it against its adversaries, but none the less energetically against its friends.

Listen to him when, with sorrow he sees them, even for impressive reasons, get away from this salutary principle:

"I believe," he says to them, "that the history of the Revolution teaches that violence exercised by the party of liberty always ends by turning against liberty."

And on another day, still more resolute, he cries to them:

"As for me, I declare to you plainly and without reservation, that if there could be a conflict between the Republic and liberty, it is the Republic which would be wrong and it is liberty that I would adjudge right."

And it is in the name of these powerful principles that he, an uncompromising believer in the separa-

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tion of State and Church, and hostile to monastic orders, wages one of his most difficult and courageous battles, for the liberty of teaching in the schools.

And with what nobility he, the unbeliever, speaks of religious sentiment and shows the dangerous foolishness and injustice of attacking it. How far we are away from aggressive sectarianism, with this republican, without any other faith than the virtue of his principles, but so intelligently respectful of what happens in the depths of souls, against which one is powerless!

"Governments," he declares, "have no power over beliefs. They can do nothing else for a religious belief than give it a new means of life by persecuting it."

"To the question of knowing whether we wish to destroy religions, I would make this very plain reply, Gentlemen, which will be the point of departure of my whole discussion: We do not wish, we cannot—and I am glad of it—destroy a single belief, in a single conscience."

When one has such a noble conception of liberty, it is natural for him to love it; and it is not diffi-

cult to make one love it. What is difficult is to have every one understand it and apply its principles with this intelligent generosity and respect for the opinions of others. This is the best way to assure the triumph of liberty.

What is also very striking in M. Clemenceau is the radiance of his soul.

There are dried up people before whom one retires within oneself. There are cold and distant persons who feel nothing or are awkward in showing the little that they feel. They leave a cold impression wherever they go. Instead of exalting the heart, they awaken by their egoism, by the calculated prudence of their words, only narrow, personal sentiments.

He is a burning flame. He is subject to enthusiasm and anger. With his marvelous vitality, which age has not affected, he inspires every one.

See the good fellow, jovial and bantering, his hat on the side of his head, his cane over his shoulder. His black eyes laugh. A joke springs from his lips. He is amused by humanity which he discovers

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and as he shows this picturesquely he, in turn, is amusing.

If he is stirred, he shows that also with a brusque but kind word. His glance becomes grave, his voice trembles, and he moves others.

He passes by, familiar and yet giving all the impression of the perfect gentleman. And he leaves in his wake sympathetic animation. He speaks with conviction a language so engaging that it brings out noble sentiments and arouses confidence.

He knows, for he has only to be sure of himself, that such fervor is strength. In order to sweep others along to enthusiasm and faith, he likes to repeat certain phrases which have become well known:

"One must believe, one must hope, in order to be strong." Or:

"One must love, one must believe. There is no other secret of life!"

Again, more sadly, when he sees the depressing effect of skepticism and indifference, he makes this famous saying his own:

"The great sickness of the soul is coldness."

One day at Saberne in his famous speech of 1893,

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he rebelled with deep irony against the insurrection of certain youths, uninspired and lacking in boldness of thought:

"Some young men have come with ideas of old men, who do not want all men with ideas of young men."

And the youthfulness of his spirit, of his hope, of his enthusiasm has remained so strong that he might well repeat to-day twenty-five years after it was first spoken, this phrase of striking redundancy.

Among the essential traits of his character which are in harmony with the warmth and radiance of his whole being are his taste and power for action.

His whole thought leads him to it. He is not one of those whose thought is mere contemplative meditation. When, by dint of study, observation and deliberation, he gets an idea he wishes to live it and translate it into action.

His brief, concise speeches are already action. They contain potential power and are only delivered in order to direct this power.

Clemenceau feels the nobility of action and proclaims it in all circumstances. He considers it one



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of the first dignities of man and one of his greatest privileges.

He looks with astonishment and with ironic pity at those who do not enjoy it.

The weak-willed and the inert seem to be fit to be placed in hot-houses. If they are wise enough to remain in private life, he only pities them for not knowing the joy of action.

However, if with this infirmity they are foolish enough to think of governing men, he sends them with sarcasm back to their life of useless contemplation. He knows too well that the irresolute man incapable of action himself, and believing, on the contrary, that he has the power, never plays any other rôle in his incurable softness and bitter enviousness, than that of paralyzing the action of others.

He has a strong sense of the ridiculous and the most ridiculous thing in the world to him and the thing which exasperates him the most, is the rambling of people who talk, not only to say nothing, but also in order to do nothing, and who happily imagine that from the moment they have spoken, the face of the whole world changes.

In the forty years of his parliamentary life he must have had to endure many discourses of men seeming to believe that the phrase is sufficient unto itself. As a deputy or senator, he never resigned himself willingly to hear them to the end; but if as a minister, undergoing an interpellation, he must be patient under this Niagara, what ironical feelings, all the more formidable because controlled, he has in face of this useless and heavy flow of words.

He is not satisfied with bringing out an idea and with suggesting a method of procedure. He is so fully convinced of the justice of this idea and of its beneficence that he hastens to fight for it. As soon as this method of procedure appears preferable to others, he does everything to assure its triumph.

His love for action throws him into battle. He knows the risks, but he does not fear the blows; and he believes it is his duty to engage in battle because the success of a just cause depends upon it.

The pusillanimous, who would like to have their opinion win out and yet have not the strength to fight until victory is won, make him smile.

This is the way he shakes them in his firm grasp when he says in his strong, concise language:

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"To win a battle, you must fight it."

Hear this other strong declaration of a fighter who believes in the virtue of making an effort:

"The victors are the people who fight."

At other times a little worried over separations between men of thought and men of action, which he noticed in France, he asked them to knock down the barriers, to spare each other the dangerous foolishness of mutual contempt, to know each other better and to unite. He tries to bring out the nobility, the poetry of action:

"To think is beautiful. To act is also beautiful. The latter is perhaps more difficult, because of all the shrieking interests which rise up in front of a new policy. Instead of excommunicating one another, help one another, you artists, thinkers, men of action. There is nothing which cannot be accomplished through the combined effort of the whole human race."

If he has not much consideration for the rambling talk of light-weight people who are content with a rambling chattering, and who have no will for action, he likes much less those who groan and

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grumble without having tried to remedy what they complain about. Nor has he any sympathy for those who having ventured into the battle, have not succeeded; and who, instead of talking firmly about their wrongs, indulge in lamentations. Jeremiads seem grotesque to him, and he turns away from them as being incongruous.

Battle has sometimes burned him cruelly. If he has struck too severe blows, he has received terrible blows which he did not merit. Had he been less well armed for the battle and had he had a soul of weaker temper, he might have died of it. If, at a given moment, he has been able to carry on his policy, it is because of his admirable power and the talent which he has discovered in himself and developed at the price of great labor.

At that critical hour, when insulted, calumniated and swept out of Parliament, he would have been excused for feeling some bitterness and discouragement, did any one hear him complain or utter a single word of revolt or sorrow?

No. The day after his defeat in the elections of 1893, the former deputy from Var, anchored at his table, proudly shut in with his books, had chosen a

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new mode of action and expression. He had made a writer of himself. His first article, superb in its serenity, faith and ardor, appeared forty-eight hours later. He set himself to his task with the good humor of the strong. Even in his most intimate conversations among his closest friends he never allowed a word of complaint to escape him.

Therefore, as a man for whom obstacles do not exist and who is inspired by the effort to knock them down, he reserves his friendship for those who do not abandon him.

I remember a young man of merit in whom, because of his intelligent bravery in life, Clemenceau was interested. In an hour of weariness and doubt, such as the best of us know, he came to M. Clemenceau, who was at that time Minister of the Interior, to ask for an unimportant position in the city government.

Believing that the young man's activity could be better employed, Clemenceau looked at him with a little surprise and sadness. Then, with the conviction that his young friend would overcome this weakening, he was rather slow in satisfying his desire.

Indeed, regaining confidence in himself and becoming desirous of doing free, creative work, at the end of several months this former candidate for the office came to Clemenceau to thank him for the proof of confidence which he had shown in not naming him for the place. The "Tiger" gave him the smile he reserves for those with whom he is satisfied.

We will only speak of his proverbial physical courage in order to put it on record. No matter how redoubtable the sword, he never hesitated to cross it with his own. Taking his aim with calmness, he faced the pistol of the most famous duelists. At the front, when his contempt for danger upset the general staff, he had the bantering humor of an old poilu.

His moral courage is not less. And his energy deserves to remain famous on the score of being a good example. In the course of his long life he has given proof of his courage in all forms, in all circumstances. But some essential touches would be lacking in this portrait if we did not insist upon certain circumstances in which he showed best the measure of his energy and courage.

In a hospital he has undergone one of those delicate major operations from which one does not know whether one will die or not, no matter how successful it has been pronounced. He is very weak and pale and lies motionless on his bed of torture. He has not even had the strength to frighten the nun, who is nursing him, by one of his teasing fancies.

In this state of great weariness and weakness he perceives that they are whispering the name of one of his very old friends and he insists that they bring him in for a moment. A half minute after the friend, very much moved, is in the room, and is ready to withdraw after he has exchanged silently a look of affection with him.

M. Clemenceau, worn out, motionless, bloodless, not knowing whether he would be alive to-morrow, but playful as on his happiest days, assumes for a moment his air of sarcastic good humor and in a very low voice improvises a wonderful joke on this visitor whom he certainly did not expect to see. In the most picturesque way he jokes his friend about his rôle in the world and a peculiarity of the town in which he lives.

We are sorry not to be able to tell it to our readers. It would amuse them; but the diplomatic censorship of M. Clemenceau would not allow it to pass.

Then, with a bantering smile and a friendly touch of the hand, he closed his eyes in order to get together his forces against Death hiding near his bed. It is a simple anecdote, but such is the man.

In speaking of the phases of his political life we have recalled to mind the interruption in it and we have shown how he found in literature and journalism the means for continuing to fight for his ideas; but do people take into account enough the great power that he had to employ to make this immediate and complete change of profession?

Without doubt he has read widely. He knows an enormous amount. He was brought up on the classics, the Encyclopedists, and English sociologists, and he was always too interested in his own times not to know modern literature.

At this time he was fifty-three years old. He carried his years well, having kept his suppleness and strength by horse-back riding and fencing. But



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he had never written, or almost never. There is no more difficult profession than that of the writer even though one is accustomed to it and has practiced it since one's youth. This impetuous man of action had to get into quite another swing. Finally his power for work, his spirit of battle, his faith in himself, might have been affected by this truly fantastic outbreak, of which he had just become a victim, and by the sly dastardliness which he was too clever not to see.

Imagine the fearful tension of his whole being necessary for this transformation. And the force of will he needed to discover that there was a writer in him and to become a great writer.

It was during this period that Clemenceau showed perhaps the greatest energy by winning his bread with his pen, writing stories and two articles a day, pursuing and enlarging his policy and proving to others, in this unmerited fall from power, that he was worth more than they believed.

It was not a momentary impulse when, in the excitement of battle and the hope of victory, a resolute man gave his whole force! It was for years and years the patient effort of every day and every

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hour. There again, with his unconquerable good humor, he was victorious.

We have seen him at close range with strikers becoming more and more excited and on the point of becoming uncontrolled. To appreciate the bravery and energy of M. Clemenceau it is necessary to know in detail the conditions in which, moved by his desire to hinder violence, he exposed himself to the anger of the crowd.

While Minister of the Interior he had left Paris in haste to tell the miners that it depended upon them alone to avoid the presence of soldiers. Already, once before on this day, he came to Lens without escort to talk to the miners man to man.

They telephoned to him that at Denain the excitement was getting absolutely alarming and that the strikers, armed with clubs, were beginning to threaten. He hurries there. From the town hall he harangues the miners and tries to calm them with his ardent persuasiveness. Nothing is accomplished. Their own uproar intoxicates them. Then he announces that he will go in a moment to talk with their delegates at the railroad station.

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In order to do so he has to cross the square, where there is nothing but this thick swarm of mad people. The prefect, the mayor, the police try to dissuade him from the dangerous step. The feverishness of the mob increases. Everything is to be feared. As much as is possible with such a man, they show him the folly of this undertaking.

"I have promised," he said simply. "We shall see!"

Moreover, he had sworn to do all to quiet this conflict.

Then, calm, with his hands in his pockets, with fearless eyes, he descends alone into that howling mob, bristling with brandished clubs and threatening fists. With their eyes fixed upon his, the men scarcely leave him a narrow passage. He permitted no one to be with him. Alone, he makes an opening through the mob. His calm courage wins him a way. Absolute master of himself, without even setting his jaws, he advances with slow step. At this moment it only needed the violence of a drunken or impulsive man to have Clemenceau struck down or made prisoner! He maintains his calmness so well that he hears one of the strikers

cry out in order to excite his comrades to seize the minister :

"There is your Bastille to capture!"

Clemenceau does not falter. His assurance, with no sign of provocation, imposes respect on the mob. The strikers let neither their hands nor their clubs fall upon him. He passes. He arrives safely. He can go to talk reason to the representatives of these excited men. Alas! Reason does not always win. But at least Clemenceau has the satisfaction of being able to say to himself that he had done all that was humanly possible so that reason could be heard through his voice.

Do we realize all the will power which Clemenceau had to exert in his firm resistance to the demands and threats of Germany in the dangerous crisis of the deserters of Casablanca? We have mentioned the incident already; and we recall it again in order to show up in full relief the calm power of Clemenceau.

Intoxicated with power, mad in its greed and its desire for domination, Germany does not submit to our refusal to allow her to take Morocco, which she

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wants so badly; and in spite of difficult compromises she shows her ill-humor in trying constantly to pick a quarrel with us. If the Pan-Germanists and the military party, headed by the Crown Prince, are wildly pushing on to "refreshing and joyous war," the Kaiser and the business world still hesitate. It is not because of ideals of morality and right, but because the game was dangerous for a nation who was prosperous and predominant in the world. If they are not yet unanimous in wishing to declare war on us, at least they wish to intimidate us. If war arises from the quarrel they are ready to wage it.

This state of mind is well known. Clemenceau is resigned. With death in his soul he counsels prudence everywhere. We are not going to run the risk of covering France with blood for the sake of Morocco, are we? If the Germans remain intractable, we ought to capitulate. Thus why lay ourselves open to a humiliation which Germany will not fail to inflict upon us, for she is sure that we do not want war, that we shall not declare it?

Yet Clemenceau resists. Many people shrug their

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shoulders with apprehension. He listens to nothing. He holds fast.

Hard responsibility! Suppose his hard uncompromising policy lets loose the tragedy?

But, well informed, he considered all sides of the question. Being convinced that Germany could not want war already, he did not bend. Also, in harmony with the Nation which he knows is trembling with exasperation, he said to himself that a nation cannot resign itself to certain results without collapsing. Battle, with its risks, but also with its chances, together with the honor of not having avoided it, is better than downfall and shame.

The outcome proved him to be right. Germany bowed before his firmness.

But let us think of those days and nights that he had to live in that terrible uncertainty under the weight of that solitary anxiety.

Let us recognize the fact that few men would have had the strength to shoulder such a great danger.

## V

### THE PATRIOT

**W**ITH his passion for justice, and his adoration for liberty, it is his love for the country which unites most clearly his life as a political man and his life as a literary man.

As far as one goes back into his past, one finds eloquent words in regard to France which are cries of faith and of savage tenderness.

In 1871, at the Assembly at Bordeaux, he is one of the protesting deputies—to-day the sole survivor among them—who swear fidelity to Alsace-Lorraine and who do not resign themselves to the separation.

When later at Versailles he demands under the form of amnesty the obliteration of our painful civil discords, it is in the interest of the country for national reconciliation that he calls for generous measures.

During the years of struggle against the distant

military expeditions, it is the worry over our frontier which obsesses him. In his uneasiness to see our forces dangerously scattered, he repeats with a sharp insistence by which people could not help being persuaded that it is on the Rhine that we must conquer colonies for ourselves.

From this moment he foresees so well what our new duel with Germany will be; the day when, the dagger at our throat, we shall be forced into it. At Draguignan, 13th of September, 1885, he cries out:

“Do you not know that if misfortune should bring it about that we would have to endure a war which we would not seek but which would be imposed upon us, it is not for a province that we would fight but for the existence of the country?”

The violence with which our social quarrels are made sad did not grieve him merely because of the mourning and misery which they bring with them, but by reason of the hatred and the grudges which they arouse and which in certain tragic circumstances could bring about a weakness of national cohesion in the face of the enemy. By counselling



a generous political policy he gives salutary warnings.

Thus, in 1891, the day after the bloody first of May of Fourmies, he says to the Chamber of Deputies:

"We wish to bring about a social condition which would permit all the sons of France to respond to her supreme call the day when she is threatened.

"Save the home, save the country! Because, if destiny does not permit us to get out from under the fatality that seems to weigh upon us, it is necessary at a given moment for France to find all of her children under the folds of her tri-colored flag. What heart, what arm would be willing to miss the supreme rendezvous!"

At the most cruel moment of his life, when, braving the wildest attacks, he would have been very excusable for only thinking of himself, he always thinks of France. Above sordid tricks and injustice, he rises toward her. In this trial concerning the Norton papers, which were boldly but fortunately so clumsily forged, he had come into the Court of Assizes as a witness, but he spoke as

an accuser. And escaping from all this pestilence, with what piety he says to soothe his soul :

“For me the country is not only the soil we tread, where we build our homes, where the family is brought up, where the France of to-morrow is made after the France of to-day. It is the community of ideas, of strong desires, and, if I may be allowed to say it, in a conquered, dismembered country, it is a community of hopes.”

As a journalist, senator and minister, the sole liberty which he, the believer in and the champion of liberty, does not recognize for anybody is that of disarming the country by a propaganda more stupid than infamous, by the insurrection organized against the sacred duty of defending the land, the soul and the independence of France. But he is not contented with stopping the blasphemy on certain impious lips and by driving out the apostles of defeatism and the perverters of weak consciences. He tries to enlighten with his ardent inspiration the crowd that they wish to mislead. It is with tenderness, with all his faith and with all his eloquence, that he proclaims our reasons for cherishing and protecting our country.

In the wonderful discourse which, as Premier, he pronounced at Amiens in 1907, at the time of the inauguration of the monument of M. René Goblet, he moved his audience and all the Frenchmen who, the next morning, were warmed by this burning page, by this cry of love, of gratitude and of pride:

"If there is a country which has the right to the love of its children and obtains it from the first smile, it is our France of yesterday, of to-day and to-morrow, the France of our proud ancestors, the France of our good brave soldiers, whom the most implacable adversary has not been able to conquer without admiring them; the France of our great thinkers, mistress of the clearest instrument of expression that ever was, the France of the artist in all fields, where free scope is given to the superior instinct of a winged race, perpetually in quest of a supreme achievement of simplicity, of clearness, of beauty; the France of our workers of all rank, so courageously stubborn in their labor, so prudently attentive to the home, always awake to knowledge, always anxious to become finer, with quick instinct for everything new, and passionately jealous for the glories of the past, always ready to astonish

their detractors by the sudden ease of their flights toward the summits as well as by the spontaneousness of their sincere return to cold reason; the France of the great human renaissance, achieved in our powerful effort of our revolutionary renovation in the name of the rights of the individual. The France of idealism in battle, by which the ancestral treasure of all humanity has been wonderfully increased; the France finally of our enchanted earth, garden of the planet, which attracts and retains the most indifferent, by the sweet intimacy of his welcome, by the grace and the charm, of the most lovable setting for human life. Gentlemen, we call upon our ancestors and our sons as witnesses, it shall not be tolerated that this great and noble France, whose fate was given to us in terrible hours, shall undergo from wicked hands, irreparable injury. We will preserve her, we will guard her, we will love her, trying to leave her greater, loftier, more beautiful still, to the generation whose duty it will be to increase her always in beauty."

This is a solemn promise which he, for his part, is keeping with such animating energy.

But while humiliating, by these words of pride and love, the braggarts of anti-patriotism, he wishes to be convinced that they are affecting a disinterestedness that in reality they have not in their hearts. He esteems them more than they esteem themselves. He places confidence in them in spite of themselves. In the discourses in the Senate in 1912, in regard to the Franco-German agreement, relative to Morocco, he rehabilitates them by anticipation in their own eyes:

“Rhetoricians, unfortunate men, not understanding the sense of the words they are pronouncing, can slander their mother, their true mother, the one for whom they have the right of the respect of all, but if ever the day comes when it will be necessary to march, these men without a country will come to ask you for a gun.”

The grave unanimity with which, on the second of August, 1914, the mobilization was carried out, has proven that Clemenceau was not mistaken. In front of the abominable outbreak of the whole German people, drunk with pride, and rendered mad by the certainty of the quarry, no one lay in wait

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with doctrines of desertion. At the call to arms no Frenchman was missing under the flag.

As resigned as he was that France should not voluntarily interrupt her work of peace, to retake by force the strip of her territory which had been torn away, Clemenceau was of those who never believed in a lasting equilibrium of the world as long as Alsace-Lorraine, so French, was in the grasp of Germany.

Its annexation, which he had not accepted even in silence, remained an incurable sorrow for him. He thought of it only with sadness. And each time that in the noble villages and towns of Alsace-Lorraine, of a character entirely French, he saw in the Prussian grip, he saw faces no less French of our compatriot prisoners, he felt that this revolting servitude could not be eternal; he always went back there with his heart oppressed, with as much depression as on the day after the declaration of war. We have the following detail from an eye-witness. When, on his return from his annual cure at Carlsbad, he was traveling through the annexed countries, without having time to stop, he had himself

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awakened at dawn to salute silently our towns, our cities under the yoke, and as from as far as he could see them, the spires of the cathedral of Strassburg, which dominate so many houses of beautiful French architecture.

Therefore, each time in these forty-seven years of separation he had occasion to speak of his attachment to Alsace-Lorraine, he did not fail to recall their martyrdom and to express with an emotion, with which he is not prodigal, the fidelity of our memory.

In 1908, particularly as Premier and as Minister of the Interior, he seized upon the pretext of the unveiling of the monument of Scheurer-Kestner, his old friend, to demand in the face of distrustful Germany our right not to forget. He did it with the prudence and the tact which his high official office demanded. But see in these measured words, in this restrained ardor, the intensity of his sadness and of his hope, and the delicacy of his admiring affection :

"It was," said he, "the time of youthful enthusiasm. In our hearts was rising the radiant hope of the great days, which through us were to be born

again. By us, France, having become again the country of the rights of man, was going to find in the applause of fraternal nations the moral grandeur of former days.

"To the sincere invocations to this beautiful dream it was war that answered. War and crushing defeat, war and dismemberment.

"The armistice concluded, Alsace, in her supreme manifestation of French life, elected Scheurer-Kestner as one of its representatives in the National Assembly. I saw him at Bordeaux when the frightful hour of the great rending sounded. A friend of Alsace, he held with all the fibers of his being to this loved land, where the flux of the orient and the reflux of the occident strike with changing fortunes. He felt then with a peculiar refinement of grief the cruel misery of the mutilation. He could not detach himself from France.

"Several months from that time I found him at Thann, struck squarely in the heart, but always sweetly stoical and trusting in the future. We called forth the memory of the peaceful life of Alsace in former days, when, in the evening, I accompanied the family, in the silence of the snow,



to the rehearsals of choral societies, in this traditional country of the art of singing. There, workmen and employers, in friendly union, of the love of art, mingled sentiments and thoughts in a love of the common country.

"Other times had come. I made with Scheurer-Kestner the hard pilgrimage to Belfort, Strassburg, ravaged by the hurricane of fire and steel. The prey of what feelings? Ask your own heart.

"And yet, on these smoking ruins, Scheurer-Kestner, expressed strongly his unconquerable hope in the future. He saw France finding and multiplying her forces during a peace giving opportunity for work, in the patient effort of every hour, in a peace stubbornly straining toward the reparation of ills, of all ills, through the development of a democracy of justice and fraternity.

"Gentlemen, I am not afraid to evoke the memory of this bloody past. Solicitous for the responsibility which is attached to my office, I have been able to talk without restraint of events which have become history and proclaim feelings which we could neither repudiate nor conceal without debasing ourselves. When we render homage to a noble

Alsatian who has honored France, what kind of men would we be if we were able to ignore the Alsace of history. No one has the right to ask that of us.

"No doubt it has been said that silence in such a case is the best safeguard for a distrustful dignity. It seems to me rather that our dignity would really only be affected if we stopped our mouths with our own hands when we are able without fear of a malevolent interpretation, to give rein to the feelings which this day suggests.

"All nations have known in turn the pride of victories and the humiliations of defeat; and, in misfortune rather than in triumph, perhaps the best part of the country has been created by the drawing together and the fusion of souls. If the peril of victory lies in the temptation of abusing it, it is in the resistance to the blows of fortune that courages are steeled and that the forces of life are banded together.

"We have received France in our hands coming forth from a terrible trial. In order to remake her in her legitimate power of expansion and in her dignity of high moral value, we have need neither

to hate nor lie: not even to recriminate. Our eyes are turned toward the future.

“What a lowering in our own esteem, as well as in the esteem of others, if we did not dare to give rein to the feelings which rise in our hearts when, before this monument, we come in contact with the memories of a glorious history of two hundred years in which our fathers have inscribed the immortal epic of the French Revolution. Two hundred years of life in common at the culminating point of civilization have melted customs, feelings, thoughts, all which determine a solid amalgamation of humanity otherwise than in the ages when the modern spirit was scarcely in the process of formation. We have received, we have given. Common to all were the joys, the griefs, the glories and the wretchedness from which the magnificent movement of modern civilization surged forth.

“In all the fields of our national activity, Alsace and Lorraine had won an eminent place, and especially in the war, for at all times the men of the province were ready for battle. Alsace gave even sailors to the world as the statue of Admiral Bruat on the public square at Colmar bears witness. Metz

gave us Fabert, as great a soldier as he was a citizen. In Pigalle's marble, Strassburg has kept the victor of Fontenoy, the most striking example of spontaneous naturalization.

"In the wars of the Republic and the Empire, in which France grew strong in an incomparable series of deeds of arms, Alsace and Lorraine offered a remarkable list of warriors, many of whom were of the first rank and whose names are inscribed on the Arc de Triomphe. Forty generals, a whole nation on the field of battle!

"Great hearts, who with their blood have made our country.

"Why should I not cite them all?

"Kellerman (from Strassburg), who, in dying, wants his heart placed under the obelisk of Valmy, with this inscription:

"'Here died the brave men who saved France on September 20, 1792.'

"Westermann (from Molsheim), dragged with Danton before the revolutionary tribunal, cries: 'Before you send me to the scaffold wait at least until my seven wounds, all received in my breast, have become scars.'

"Ihler (from Thann) wins the admiration of his chiefs at the attack on the lines at Wissembourg: a glorious ancestor of the young captain who recently fell under the French flag.

"Bouchotts (from Metz), Minister of War, assists powerfully the Committee of Public Safety in the organization of the armies.

"Lefebore (from Rouffach) decides the victory at Fleurus.

"Kleber, ancient hero, sleeps at Strassburg on the *place d'Armes* with the citation for great bravery which was to win the victory.

"The son of Kleber (from Metz) is made illustrious by the charge at Marengo.

"Wagram sees Lasalle (from Metz) fall at the age of thirty-four years, covered with glory.

"Eble (from Rohrbach) saves the army at Bevensina.

"Ney, finally, Ney (from Sarrelouis), left a Frenchman in 1814 by the delimitation of the new frontier, finds himself thrown on the German side by the treaties of 1815. Thus, when he appears before the Chamber of Peers, his defender, Dufer, without having consulted him, can argue that his

changed nationality takes him out of the jurisdiction of the court. But the man of Moskawa, trembling with emotion, rises and cries out: 'No, Gentlemen, I am a Frenchman! I insist upon dying as a Frenchman!' We can see his statue from here, a replica of the one at Metz."

Knowing that Clemenceau, head of the French Government, was getting ready to extol Alsace-Lorraine without any limits except those which he thought best to impose upon himself, we wished to have the emotion of hearing this discourse, of which all the phrases, pronounced with increasing emotion, and all the implications, understood and acclaimed by all, gripped all hearts.

While in power and when he had become once more a senator and journalist, Clemenceau saw to it more and more that France should keep her armor and her moral force which, alone, permits a nation to defend itself well.

We have told of the important rôle in the difficult struggle for the return to the law of the three years' military service, which Louis Barthou, Premier at that time, sustained by such eloquence, patriotic deputies such as M. Georges Leygues and

others, carried on, with so much courage and perseverance until victory was won.

Certain sad gentlemen, when the safety of France was at stake, only sought an electoral platform suitable for the caperings of their ambitions, and did not take into consideration the rôle which Germany was playing through bribery in this trouble. At their instigation, some ill-humor was manifested in two or three garrisons, among certain soldiers who had not been carefully enough prepared for the boredom of a third year in barracks.

Clemenceau was grieved over it and he scolded them in a fatherly way. With a trembling in his voice, he appealed to the noble sentiments which he knew survived in their erring hearts.

They had been talked to about disarmament; and, in the madness of a day, some of the gentlemen had accepted the idea without a thought of the mortal peril that such a suggestion carries for us.

Addressing one of them as a son who is temporarily insane, Clemenceau talks reason to him with great firmness mixed with tenderness and with gripping eloquence. It is one of the great pages which bring tears to the eyes:

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"Some one must begin, you say? Not at all. Two at least are necessary in order to begin. While you are disarming do you hear the sound of cannon on the other side of the Vosges? Take care. You will weep out all the blood in your heart without being able to expiate your crime. Athens and Rome, the two greatest things of the past, were swept from the earth the day the sentinel failed to watch as you have begun to do. You, your France, your Paris, your village, your field, your road, your brook, all this tumult of history from which you come forth because it is the work of your ancestors, is all this nothing to you and are you going to quietly deliver up the soul from which your soul has been formed, to the fury of the foreigner? Yes. Then say that is what you want. Dare to say it so you can be cursed by those who have made you a man, that you may be dishonored forever.

"You stop? You did not understand? You did not know? A sacrifice has been asked of you heavier than you thought? It was an increase of effort which was asked of you as well as of others who would have believed themselves unworthy of France if they had murmured. Well, remember that this



is not enough for the country. Some day, when hope is blooming, you will leave your parents, your wife, your children, all that you cherish, all which holds your heart, and you will go, singing, as yesterday, but another song, with brothers, real brothers, to meet frightful death which will mow down human lives in a fearful hurricane of steel. In that supreme hour you will see in a flash all that is comprised in this word, so sweet: 'My country.' And your cause will appear so beautiful you will be so proud to give all for it, that, whether wounded or killed, you will fall content."

A prophecy which came true. Among the few mutineers of 1913, brave little fellows without malice, whose disappointment was poisoned, how many died a hero's death after having endured the hardest trials for their country, which they did not believe they loved so much. Under the bitterness of the blasphemies by which they calumniated themselves, Clemenceau had divined their true hearts. To help them to recover themselves, he had given them, in a magnificent outburst, the best he has in himself.

We were still far from the tragedy. No one could foresee in what kind of a moral atmosphere it would find France, nor how France would rebound under the aggression. Did the most confident imagine that in face of the threat, in spite of evil doctrines, she would be entirely thrilled with sacred enthusiasm and sublime devotion?

However, because Clemenceau had never doubted the French nation, admirable when it feels it must stand up for the defense of its rights, he had foreseen the near future and the magnificent spirit of sacrifice, with which, singing as they went to war, our soldiers would dazzle the world.

He wrote about this time:

"In the life of nations, there comes an hour when a hurricane of brilliant exploits passes over men!"

What a phrase to place as the heading for books in which historians will retrace for future generations the martyrdom and the heroism of France, streaming with blood, but radiant with glory. Is it not also an inscription to carve upon monuments which will be erected everywhere to our immortal dead?

With all his kindliness, a little rude but efficient

because of his frankness, he was bolstering up the weakening souls. At the same time, with an anxiety that sounded in his voice, he was busy with material means for our defense. The fifteenth of July, 1914, a few days before the cataclysm, which one felt was threatening more and more, but which one did not believe so close, Clemenceau cried out on the tribune of the Senate:

“We, clinging to what remains to us of France, we do not wish, we cannot undergo the same trial the second time. It is not sufficient to be heroes. We must be conquerors.”

This strong will, for four and a half years, inspires all his efforts in the war, and explains to us the passionate violence of his attacks, all which appeared to him, rightly or wrongly, to slow up and compromise victory. For four years he has lived only for victory. It is towards victory that all his moral and physical force is directed.

The people love him for his jovial and warm brusqueness and take into account all that he has done personally for the country. Therefore it is with entire justice that the people in their picturesque and familiar language call him affection-

ately "Father Victory." These sentences were pronounced in the course of a half century, and in different periods of his life, in most diverse circumstances and in different states of mind, in the hours of bold and triumphant youth, as well as in the hours of terrible struggles in which his enemies thought that they could strike him down; they were spoken in regard to our civil discords or in regard to our political battles for a better guard on our frontiers. We should have been glad to multiply these citations but we believe that we have shown the defense, the glory, the happiness, the prosperity, of the country in justice and liberty, with the omnipresent ideas of M. Clemenceau.

It remains for us to seek the profound sources of this vigilant and apprehensive patriotism. First of all there is as a fundamental element an ardent, tender and always youthful love for his native soil. Moulleron-en-Pareds. Vendée. Its deep roads. Its marshes. Its trees. Its sky. It is there where the old people, whom he continues, lived worthily and industriously. It is there that float ethereal, vivid memories of childhood and of family. It is

there that wild, turbulent and high spirited, he spent the first years of his school life. It is there again that his sentiment awakened in the poetry and in the luminous mystery of nature. What enchantment he discovered little by little in the grandness of nature! With what intoxication, alert, vigorous, overflowing with life, he took possession of them!

"My joy," he says to them in one of his books, "was to run, to drink in the sky, the wind, the rain, the sun, to intoxicate myself with the odors of grass, to marvel at the spectacle of the earth."

The landscape where, in the exultation of his youthful energy, one has known this happiness, is forever sacred, were this landscape in the eyes and the soul of a simple passer-by, without character and without beauty.

For a man endowed with a little fraternal imagination, patriotic sentiment results not only from the joys and the personal emotions, which his native corner have given to him, but also from the intensity in which he represents to himself the similar joys and emotions, which from innumerable hills and plains of France, united by so many memories of our common history, have brought to other com-

patriots. The love of the country is born of the strong tenderness which is inspired in us, by all these little countries. And in his rude warrior's heart Clemenceau has always kept this bit of grass of his native land, kept fresh by the pure waters of his first memories.

Thus, in short, he loves the earth like a man who has lived in the midst of peasants, who knows and respects their hard labor. He knows the hardship, the patience, the humble heroism of each day which, so to speak, sanctifies the attachment of the countryman to his little field. The peasant is fierce and without generosity if not without pity. That is possible. But this hardness in his feeling of possession has its excuse in the constant hardness of his effort. No respite. No security. The hail ravages what the frost spares. From father to son without allowing himself to be cast down by failures, he exhausts himself over the furrows.

Clemenceau, who, in the toil of his perpetual battle, has acquired so much esteem for the workers who do not give away, cannot but have respect for these silent but untiring people, ignorant of their own valiance.

As a child, as a young man, and, during his whole life, at each one of his happy sojourns in his native village, and elsewhere, he has been the wondering witness of their perseverance. He knows all the forms of rural labor, the demands and the cares of each season.

His experience in the country knows what hardships are represented by the honest golden loaf of the French family. He knows all the exhaustion and care in the recompense of the vintage. He knows the fatigue represented in the linen shirt which the living wear or in the cloth which envelops the dead for eternity.

Do not believe that this warrior of these great political and national battles passes with indifference before the bed, the chest, or the cupboard that is transmitted from generation to generation! No one appreciates better the merit and lofty value of this treasure, so touching. It is because Clemenceau, full of sentiment and, poetical under his brusqueness, as much as he is a realist, understands the human dignity and the energy symbolized by these poor touching things, loves his country and wishes to preserve it.

For his mind, which reconstructs tragedies and recalls them, war, invasion, mean the red flame of the fire in the thatched roofs, the ancestral furniture on the wagons, going at hazard on the roads, the broken plow and harrow, the frightened beasts galloping before the wave of fire.

In his hatred of the Prussian, four times in a hundred years the destroyer of the rustic homes of France, in his unconquerable will to crush forever his noxious domination, there is in Clemenceau, rest assured, the tender memory of his native land, of the grave and meritorious existence of the French peasant. And that is one of the reasons why, holding the incendiary looting Boche by the throat, he will not let him go.

But his patriotism has other profound sources. It is ennobled by the highest ideals. For him France is not only his native land, the country of gay and delightful life, of likeable customs, filled with memories.

It is also the cradle of generous thoughts. From there in all times came great hopes which enchanted humanity or offered it a solace. It is from our



country that the crusades set forth to make the fraternal pity of Christianity shine over the whole world, still savage. Chivalry with its elegances of bravery, its proud courtesy even in battle, and the refinements of its worship of woman, revealed to the astonished nations a superior civilization.

Was it not also in our cities that the cries of liberty first resounded? They grow stronger from century to century, at the same time that the love of country is born, and is exalted in our hearts until the days when the generous and human aspirations of the French soul are inscribed in books, which delight the heart of the world.

French idealism has brought forth, among many ruins and sufferings, light and liberty. Without it, what cruelty, what slavery would still exist.

Right, so often derided, would succumb still more under brutality and caprice. Human life, which is too often held cheaply, would be the object of less respect. Consciences, whose free meditation one would wish never to be troubled, would suffer many other injuries. Finally, man, whom so many chains, so much ignorance and so many fears still bind, would be absolutely lost in servitude and darkness.

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The world is thankful to France for the liberation she has brought to it. Her prestige is made of her everlasting and glorious efforts to free men and to give them a superior moral life. The words "Liberty, Justice, and Human Fraternity," are for the universe synonyms for the word "France."

Is not a striking proof of this given to us by this war? With what enthusiastic sympathy, with what pride, with what happiness people who are free or who aspire to liberty have come to group themselves about us, to strike down forever a race and a government of oppression!

Justly proud of her noble and long history, of which she is writing with her blood the most sublime pages, France is loved above all because of the hope which she has caused to blossom in the human soul.

The patriotism of a man such as Clemenceau is born of the faith in the beneficence of this French ideal, of the pride and the happiness he feels in seeing our country surrounded by the grateful affection of nations, because always, throughout the ages, he has made himself the disinterested propagator of the French ideal.

He wants France to be victorious in order that this ideal may triumph forever and in order that the shining light of our country may be increased.

He has said it himself in one of his memorable speeches which we cannot neglect without failing to recognize one of the elements, one of the essential forces, of his patriotism. For example, he says in the Chamber of Deputies in 1884:

"We have received from our constituents not only the mandates to defend the material country, our fields and our cities, but also the great patrimony of ideals which is the domain of the French Revolution, which is our conquest, the conquest of democracy, the conquest of humanity and of right over oppression and arbitrary power. That is the domain which we have received from our fathers and which we will defend at all costs. But it is necessary to give us the means to do so."

Later, in 1893, at Saberne at a time when under a machine gun fire of insults and calumny, he would have been very excusable to speak only of himself, he keeps enough serenity to define his patriotism. Summing up all that France represents in his eyes,

he cries out in the same spirit that we have just indicated :

“Let us prepare to-day in maintaining in all her force, France, the great sower of ideas, of emancipation, of liberty, of justice; France, the country of men. Diminished, conquered, let us take care of her forces of defense.

“And if we are permitted to unite for an hour our hostile arms in a victorious effort for the country, it will be because we have been the favorites of destiny.

“Whether this good fortune is given to us or not, let us try to merit it by placing above all the safeguarding of the soil of the country; by developing unceasingly in the hearts of our fellow citizens that which makes the moral strength of the country; the restless, radiant mind of France in quest of an ever loftier ideal.”

One of the essential characteristics of Clemenceau would be lacking if in performing our task of historian we had not added from some of his speeches to all his other reasons for loving his country, his love for the ideal which renders his country to his eyes more noble, more lovable, more glorious.

Especially the sufferings and grief of mutilated France, of which he was the powerless spectator in 1870-71, the martyrdom of Alsace-Lorraine and her great cry of despair the day she was torn away, aroused with a cruel wound the delicate deep patriotism.

In the midst of youthful impressions, of clear memories and exalting thoughts, this was the direct and poignant emotion which dominated forever his whole life.

Clemenceau had seen our soldiers conquered in spite of their heroism because they were insufficiently armed. He had seen our villages on fire and our people under the yoke because our keystone of defense had been too weak. So he had sworn that he would do everything so that France could not be trampled, drenched with blood, and put to ransom again. Alsace-Lorraine attached to the black and white boundary post of the victorious Empire, renewing constantly in all forms its proud protest, remained for him a source of grief and remorse.

He belongs to a generation for which, in spite of the tasks and dangers of the ensuing hours, these

atrocious things could never become historical anecdotes.

Clemenceau, whose first great political act was a solemn oath of fidelity to Alsace-Lorraine, is one of those who never became resigned and who have kept with hope the apprehension of new German outbursts and maintained the hope of being able to render them impossible.

The only one living in the parliamentary world of the men who had a rôle in this tragedy, Clemenceau makes the new-comers understand the state of mind of the older people who, if they have not had the happiness to reconstruct the country, have at least built its ruins, remade its forces, added youthful glory to his glory and have not let hope be extinguished.

In the language of the foresters, the "witnesses" are the great trees, rare survivors of former cuttings, that are kept in the midst of the young growth and thickets to recall the majesty of the lofty forest trees which have disappeared.

Ravaged, but powerful and dominating, they rear their lofty motionless trunks above the little branches which bend and the frail foliage rustling

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at their feet. Having resisted the worst torments, having seen the young vegetation wither, and die around them, they permit us to imagine the deep perspective, disappeared these many years, of the great trees which sprang up with them and which, like them, would be ancestors to-day.

When at the turn of a path, their lofty silhouettes rise up, for some minutes one does not pay attention to the twigs of the little trees of our height which sway and crack. The heart is only moved by the old shivering of the "witness," especially if, in our youth, we have heard hundreds of other great trees of the same period now cut down, swaying over our heads with the same rustling. It is the past with its hopes, its failures, its grandeur, its pain, and also its teaching which lives here again.

When Clemenceau came back into power he was the sole survivor in the Chamber of an epoch already far away. When I saw him mount to the tribune and heard him speak in his noble, proud language, which had not echoed then for so long a time, I could not help thinking of the impressive "witnesses" of our forests.

The new parliamentarians who crowded around

him had not known the same tempests, nor trembled with the same hopes, and anger, nor vibrated with the same enthusiasms. They had not come into politics or even into life itself until after the great torments that Clemenceau and his companions of battle had suffered. The dismemberment of the country was already far-away history when they entered the lists. Many of them had brought there, if not forgetfulness and renunciation, at least other preoccupations more immediately pressing upon them and which do not allow them to see how far the future of liberty, of humanity, of peace, of justice depends upon the indispensable reparations for the rendings and the violence of the past. They spoke another language, and war, although disconcerting for their dreams, had not gotten them out of the habit of speaking thus.

Others, nobly disinterested but prisoners of their wild dreams which are disastrous when the life of the country is at stake, were too dazzled by these chimeras to look squarely at the frightful reality with which we are locked in a death struggle. While they dream, unreasonable and dogmatic, they paralyze the defense by anticipation of the future peace



with which they burden our present effort. In spite of all our chances to conquer, the danger increases, at the same time that the hardest sacrifices are imposed upon us to remedy our errors and mistakes.

Thus, here is the "witness" of a former generation, of old French wounds and of living hopes, on the tribune and in power.

France, which does not wish to die and which recognizes herself in him, has called him back into power. With a movement which strikes down all resistance, she forces it. In vain the frail, bending saplings make the noise of their agitation sound at his feet. His high, straight, powerful trunk, carrying the traces of struggles and old wounds, is the rallying point of the whole French will. All alone of his time, he is silhouetted on the sky of torment as if his companions of yore were still standing around him against the blast.

On that day listening to M. Clemenceau we heard the voice of our ancestors. By his declaration, his ardent cry of love for the country, liberty, justice, the rights of individuals and nations, in his powerful but serene speech, he told us that, for the moment, our whole duty was to unite our forces

more than ever, to fight without discussion and to resign ourselves silently to all suffering in order to conquer.

We recognized this voice because we had heard it in childhood and our youth. With what emotion we found it again. Let him smile who wishes. We are glad to tell him our joy and confidence. Those who formerly spoke this proud but reasonable language certainly did not have so much eloquence as M. Clemenceau; but it was the same thought, the same strength of conviction and of hope.

For them the Republic was before all, at the price of all sacrifices, the defense of the country. Many of them had become republicans only through patriotic anxiety and faith. But the Republic was also the reign of law, equal for all and master of those who make it. It was the sincere respect for complete religious and political freedom. It was the reign of justice, of work, of talent. It was the suppression of intrigue and favoritism. It was the struggle against the arrogance of the unscrupulous, personal interests, against all corporation power or

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any reestablishment of a new feudalism under financial, parliamentary or other form.

Certain deviations of these ideas had come about, even before the war. Since the war they appeared more shocking and more dangerous. It was too long a time since the voice of the country had resounded imperiously, with such power. Honor to the "witness" which had risen to revive tradition and call back duty! The Committee of Public Safety and the Government of National Defense have spoken through his mouth. Immediately, with the energy of his ancestors, he harmonized his acts with his words.

There rose in the battle, the "witness" bearing in his old heart together with his own ardor, that of his companions who had fallen without seeing their noble dream come true but without having renounced it.

He, the survivor, has the supreme joy of keeping the solemn oath made by all in sorrow and of realizing the hope common to all these patriotic Frenchmen whom death has mowed down around him.

History knows no more wonderful destiny.

## VI

### THE ORATOR—THE WRITER

**T**HE eloquence of Clemenceau is movement, it is life.

Instantly his clear thought finds the expressive phrase, and the one which is best adapted to the audience which he is addressing. Its hurrying rhythm makes it all the more striking.

He has a horror of emphasis and of tumultuous volubility accompanied by great gestures. He is irked by a trailing affluence of style; and if by chance in the course of a speech he happens to become entangled in it, he quickly frees himself.

For his temperament, all that belongs to the theater and the old style of acting. This sonorousness, sometimes very artificial, is far from always corresponding to the ardor within the orator! If he is the heir of the doctrines of the revolution and if he has received the ideas of the men of 1848, he has little taste for their oratorical solemnity.

Clemenceau does not like long-haired eloquence. His own eloquence wears, as he does, short hair. Therefore, one sees better the vigorous bone structure and the form of its powerful skull is outlined more clearly.

His terse, tense sentences, go straight to the target like an arrow. They are not encumbered with epithets. Strong, short, stripped of useless words, they contain only the words necessary for the expression of the idea. Moreover, each discourse is, as a whole, carefully arranged and put together, which produces a great effect on the mind.

One can say that a speech of Clemenceau's consists of reason with just enough substance in order to live and to influence and to endure.

There is no dryness in this strong soberness. There is no grandiloquence, but restrained ardor which burns underneath his words, an inner flame which gleams brightly. More than by the sound of words, it is manifested by rigorous logic, by resolute accents. There is a swift movement which, together with the sudden improvisation and the flash of brilliant repartee, burst like a thunderbolt through his closely knit arguments.

Clemenceau is certainly vivacious and impetuous in his gestures. On the tribune, as in the corridors, in his editorial office, in a drawing room, he is a conversationalist who is full of life. He keeps in touch with his auditors, rebelling at interruptions even when he wants to appear to be listening.

But he is one of these orators who, talking with his arms at rest or with his hands in his pockets, have their oratorical effect rather in their look, their facial expression and in the compressed energy of what they are saying.

He walks up and down, master of himself, attentive to the least motion in the room, never losing sight of the aim of his vigorous demonstration, even when he seems to allow himself to be diverted for a second by trifles along the way.

His hand rests for a moment on his portfolio, if it is with him, or runs along the cover of the tribune while he walks with calm steps as he pursues his tense discourse.

At a remark thrown out by an innocent who does not know the danger of such imprudence, he turns, sarcastic and quick to reply. Laughter ripples, and undisturbed, as if he were not concerned with these

fireworks, which he has fired off, he takes up his demonstration with a gleam of amusement in his eyes.

If the interrupter is wordy, and if Clemenceau does not mind allowing him to get into a fix, he puts his hands down deep in his pockets, leans up against the desk until the uncontrolled talker has finished his observations. Moreover, he does not lose anything by waiting. The reply will, as always, be courteous. But generally it does not put the laughter on the side of the imprudent gentleman. The penalty that he must pay is almost always in proportion to the length of his palaver.

He also has the art of putting an end, by a repartee covering the whole case, to the quick fire interruptions which spring forth all at once from a whole group. Thus, one day when the socialists were pretty well aroused and were chopping up his carefully prepared speeches with their violent remarks, he calmed them down with this sly dig: "Be careful of arousing too much fear, lest in the future city people may be intolerant!"

The interrupters were the first to smile and henceforth abstained from troublesome remarks.

☛ If he hears some curious thing which astonishes him or if he remembers an illogical or incoherent fact, a piece of foolishness or wild dream, Clemenceau, as a man into whose brain such nonsense cannot enter, makes his well known gesture of stupefaction in the face of such extravagance, by holding up his outstretched hands as high as his head.

Then with his cutting and yet animated voice he demonstrates, chides, demands. With all the authority of his clear thought, he holds people bowed under the force of his arguments. At these moments you could hear a pin drop. Clemenceau straightens up, throws back his head and fixes his eyes on his auditors. He pays no attention to the interruptions thrown at him. With his accustomed gesture of emphatically pointing his forefinger down at the crowd, he plants his reasons in the heads of the listeners.

On the tribune he constantly gives an impression of great clearness and unrelenting logic together with an impression of absolute control over himself, of an ease, which nothing disconcerts, and of good humor. One feels that he likes this lively battle of ideas, that his fencing, with its sudden and



unforeseen thrusts, amuses him, because of all his natural gifts which it gives him a chance to exercise.

This rapid, sober eloquence, with its striking logic, is, moreover, very beautiful in its concise strength. It has the nervous beauty of the impetuous thoroughbred, the strong beauty of a weapon of battle. His are speeches which bear re-reading.

The dramatist, Henri Becque, whose human plays retain all their interest in the study, far from the stage, used to say: "The best drama is the drama of the library." He meant a drama which can bear reading. The same is true of oratory. Speeches can please by their animation and physical charms, such as the voice, gesture, and bearing of the orator. But how many of them out of the atmosphere in which they were pronounced and which helped their success, do not bear reading because of their poverty of expression, their loose unordered construction, and their redundant banality. Clemenceau's speeches are well rounded out and well arranged. His sentences, never weighed down by epithets, are strong in their striking nakedness.

Also, hurried as he is to arrive at his goal through his close arguments and by expressive, pithy sayings, a speech of Clemenceau's at whatever period it was delivered, is always rich in substance and ideas. All his observations are summed up in a few words, in a way not to slow down the quick movement of his demonstration; but they reveal vast culture, knowledge of history, meditation over the works of social philosophy, and the discipline of an intense pondering over the great problems of yesterday, to-day and forever.

An evolution took place in his eloquence when Clemenceau, deprived of the tribune for the time being, began to mold his thought by writing. Up to that time his form of expression had been very familiar.

His eloquence remains full of life, incisive and of a keen logic. It retains its quickness, its sharpness, and the persuasive power of a strong and rapid dialectic. However, in certain passages of a complex shade, one feels that the orator assumes the habit, even when he is speaking, of hunting for the written form of his idea. He is no longer satisfied

with a speech which would only be a brief, brutal bit of sword play.

A man of action, of course he cares above all for the goal he wishes to reach and the influence he wishes to exercise. He loses nothing of his inexorable logic, of his brilliant irony, of his precious gift of rebounding under interruptions which he answers with a phrase and without stopping. But he is glad to allow the philosophical and social reasons of his ideas to appear.

His speeches, from this time on, perhaps have not, in certain passages at least, this naked force which made them so impressive. Their movement is not so quick. But, as a compensation, what fullness, what richness is found in them!

By refinements and subtleties, by the construction of sentences, by scholarly perspectives of words and thoughts, which cannot deceive writers, one recognizes the work of a pen, made, surely, with a rare quickness of composition, but without which the sentence cannot possess color or high relief. It has not been learned by heart like certain stock phrases of some of our most brilliant orators; but one cannot doubt that it has been written and that the

essential part of its structure must remain in the mind of the speaker.

Even in this new and enriched style, Clemenceau is not one of these orators who, troubled by the idea of an impeccable unfolding of their speech committed to memory, walk right along as if on a tight rope, too much preoccupied with their feat to notice the thrills of the audience and to reply to them.

His speeches are carefully studied and of a rare loftiness of view; but their careful preparation does not disturb his accustomed ease or the timeliness of his brilliant fancy.

Let an interruption be made, and immediately, if it deserves a reply, the fencer on the tribune, stopping most carefully thought-out oratorical periods, protects himself with a clever or caustic parry. Then with perfect freedom of mind, he takes up his demonstration, so effective by the nobility of his idea and the brilliancy of his words.

Since the time when the writer has made the impression on the orator, Clemenceau, as Minister and twice as Premier, has had occasion to pronounce, at memorable ceremonies, certain written dis-

courses of magnificent oratorical movement and of a striking depth of thought which are masterpieces of literary eloquence.

If he is placed upon the tribune by popular acclamation as during the manifestation in honor of Alsace-Lorraine or is forced by the sudden turn of events in the war to speak in the Senate or in the Chamber, immediately, the orator, forgetting the writer, finds again all his gifts as a powerful impromptu speaker.

He knows how to be in turn familiar and pathetic through his sober intensity. With his voice, heavy but pleasing in its quality and emotion, when he wishes, he rises to the most gripping lyricism of expression and thought.

Thus, one day in the autumn of 1918 after M. Paul Deschanel's spirited speech, paying homage to our victorious soldiers and inspiring greatest hopes in all French hearts, he paraphrased with a burning ardor, the song of the *Marseillaise*. Transported by the spirit of this wonderful improvisation, the deputies leapt to their feet and broke out into thunderous applause.

In movement and in life the orator is like the writer.

With his pen in his hand, Clemenceau preserves his clear, close logic, his picturesque, terse power of expression.

His articles are generally long and cannot be shortened because they are very substantial. But the sentence is almost always brief, sinewy and in high relief.

With Clemenceau, the warrior, the discussion of ideas is often adorned with fillips on the noses of his adversaries. In hot discussions, his flashing irony illuminates the most difficult train of reasoning, and adds a great attraction.

In front of his blank paper, he keeps his good humor. He shoots his arrows with a kind of joviality. He scratches in joking. His laughter, even when very malign, lessens the sting. One guesses the most of the time that, when once his feelings are relieved, he is ready to hold no grudge against the people he has handled roughly. This is very rare in battle, for there are people who get angry in proportion as they strike, and growing wild in

the slaughter feel their hatred increase against the men that are violently attacking.

That which distinguishes Clemenceau's pages from the pamphlets of certain other polemicists, even of great talent, is their fulness.

Very often articles of this kind are brilliant, but empty. The word replaces the idea. On the other hand their authors do not have to fret about presenting new arguments. Since the public is generally convinced and follows them passionately, it only desires one thing: the repetition of the same theme with variations as long as their frenzy lasts.

The articles which Clemenceau has published every day for twenty-five years are, on the contrary, astonishingly diversified. Far from interesting only by humorous sarcasms, all offer, in addition, the attraction of a noble and generous philosophy, of profoundly human thoughts, and of well arranged reasoning.

They are doctrinal articles which become, accessorially in the course of the discussion, polemical articles. Clemenceau is a fighter for an idea, but not a pamphleteer.

When one reads him regularly for a certain num-

ber of years, one admires not only his strong arguments and his wit, but also his vast knowledge of the world of ideas, his feeling for life and history, the loftiness of his views.

The least event of the day—an incident in the street or in Parliament, the scandal which is exposed or condemned, the latest book or an exposition being held—is a reason for him to philosophize. Without pedantry, and only by discussing it in a wide-awake, striking manner, he lets appear all that he has read or seen, all that he knows, and the grave meditations of a lucid, powerful brain always at work.

It happens that too much philosophy leads this clear, sober talent into a little too much abstraction, sometimes confused and in a less felicitous form. These are the defects of very noble qualities. One cannot complain, because we owe so many profound, luminous pages to that ardent interrogation of his thoughts.

To this worship of reason and this passion for the free play of ideas which come from his family education and his reading, are joined his sensitiveness to nature and his curiosity, sometimes tender,



sometimes amused, often indignant, in regard to the human comedy. This is the result of his contact in the city and in the fields, with numberless men of all social classes, of all opinions, of all countries.

M. Clemenceau has shown these precious literary qualities in his stories and in the pages of his romance, *Les plus Forts*. For, if he has written many cutting and persuasive articles on the political situation, if he has carried on many resounding campaigns in which his concise logic and his power of discussion were employed, there is a large part of his work, which, more serene but full of life, is an evocation of nature and humanity.

Although very different from the other writings of M. Clemenceau it is in close relationship with them, because, the picturesque stories, moving and full of pity underneath, the direct irony, were born of the same social philosophy, of the same generous inspiration and contributed in establishing in Clemenceau the perfect unity of thought and action under the different forms in which it is manifested.

Attentive to the spectacles of nature and to the actions of men as he is curious about ideas and wrapped up in history, his clear brain has been fed

on our classic authors whose solid reason and knowledge of the human heart, and whose unerring judgment enchanted his spirit. He was steeped in the masters of the 18th century who are dear to him because of their free criticism, their independence of mind and their generous aspirations. He followed carefully the works of the English sociologists and the works of the French socialists of the middle of the 19th century, so fraternal and so sincerely desirous of concord and harmony.

His language, original as it may be and so faithful in its expression of a clear-cut character, undergoes a different influence. His thought bears the mark of it.

The good sense, the healthy morals, the firm honesty of our classicists and their vigor have strengthened his passion for truth, his pressing need for frankness and clearness, his revolt against all that is hypocritical, soft and unreasonable, and have increased his uneasiness in the face of chimeras and mental disorders.

He is still more directly related to the encyclopedists, to the great prophets and men who prepared the modern world.

Curious about ideas, stirred by plastic arts as well as by the theater and literature, taken up with philosophy as well as with social problems, as he fences in the political battles, he has the effervescence of a Diderot.

Everything interests him powerfully. In his mind there are no barriers between the fields of his knowledge. All the forms of creative activity are correlated in him. He has ideas on everything. He feels the need of immediately having his say on everything and a certain happiness in being heard.

Then, like the writers of the 18th century, he is in love with liberty, right, justice. Like them he is an optimist. He believes in progress, in knowledge as a beneficent teacher, in the amelioration by her of the lot of men.

If a few people astonish and irritate him—while amusing him—by their incoherence and their laziness of mind, he has confidence in human reason, in the future of humanity. It is optimism and confidence which increase his power for action.

He has the passion, the impetuosity, the fluttering of a Diderot—but of a more active Diderot. At the same time one finds in his pages something of

an after-taste of the irony of Voltaire and a little of his withering smile, with more joviality in his observation of human defects.

Let us add to this, the influence of certain masters of the last century. For example, as affirmative as Clemenceau is in his precise rigorous opinions, does not one find in his independence and boldness, in the face of no matter what problem, the subtle freedom of mind of a Rénan? In his short sentences, striking in their pithiness, is there not sometimes a recollection of Victor Hugo? Finally in Clemenceau's most burning pages, which he writes in critical hours, under the impulse of a strong emotion, do not his restrained exaltations, his alarmed patriotism, his fraternal glow recall somewhat the lyricism of Michelet speaking of France and the country?

Thus appears the literary filiation, in thought and form, of this statesman who became a writer and remained a man of action in his study. It is plain that, if our impressions as a reader are correct, he is of a great lineage.

Through all these distant formative influences, which only a very careful analysis establishes, there

is the vigorous personality of Clemenceau, this thing which makes him one of the masters of modern French literature. It is the rare union of the loftiest idealism with a sharp sense of the real, the taste for philosophical speculation joined to a great sensitiveness for Nature, Art and Beauty.

His meditation and his power of action, which rarely go together, strengthen each other. This harmony is found in his writings. He passes without effort from the exposition of his views to the evocation of a spectacle of nature and of the world.

Like his eloquence, his style is movement itself. Logic, one of the controlling factors of his brain, is adorned with imagery and color. Impetuous but always of an unchangeable lucidity, passionate but always controlling his ardor, he goes from the most rigorous argument to irony, to sarcasm, to strong chiding, to the most tender poetry, to lyricism.

He reasons with all his intelligence and will brought into action.

And suddenly a flame springs from his heart.

His literary work, at the same time rumbling with passion and of such high intellectuality, his quick, jerky, sentences which suddenly become

gripping, bear the mark of this firm, clear reason and of this motive power.

With his pen in his hand, he gives himself entirely. And one guesses that, happy in his full liberty, having only to reckon with himself, he gives himself with pleasure.

In reading him one imagines the satisfaction that such a fighter must have, even in the midst of the worst injustice, when, in the silence and solitude of his study, he is able to enjoy the magnificent power, which is possessed by a man of letters in front of a blank sheet of paper.

And one feels that, to-day after twenty-five years of this spiritual pleasure, M. Clemenceau delights in the enchantment which the writer feels, at depending only upon himself.

On the tribune, in the corridors, the man of politics, if he wishes to have influence, must be occupied with ideas, with interests, and reactions of things round about him. Necessarily in order not to condemn himself to powerlessness, he leaves a little of his faith at each turning, and of his thought at every embrasure. The writer, if he has the courage, is the sovereign master of his soul. Cle-

menceau, who was as firm and independent as a political man can well be, had this courage. He had also the great reward. His haste to take up his pen shows well that, having given himself this enjoyment, he will not renounce it, henceforth, any more than he will renounce the exalting dignity of letters.

In the least important of his daily articles, M. Clemenceau shows himself a master writer by the loftiness of his views, the persuasive force of his reasoning, by the firmness of his concise sentences, the strength and brilliancy of his shafts and by the sudden sweep of his emotion.

The best of his articles, those which are most closely related to his doctrines and continue his policy best, those also which deal with some subjects of humanity and have been brought together into volumes, such as: *La Mêlée Sociale* (1895), *Le Grand Pan* (1896), *Au Fil des Jours* (1900), *Aux Embuscades de la Vie* (1903). The extraordinary variety of the subjects treated in these books does not prevent an impression of unity from clinging about them. It results from the generous philosophy with which the ideas, the events, the

men of the moment are appreciated. And the commentary, which he makes upon them, has so much loftiness, is of such a free and profound spirit reveals such a knowledge of life and of history, that in spite of the passing present to which these brilliant articles are connected, one still reads with interest the books in which they are assembled.

These fine pages written from day to day have been carefully joined together by M. Clemenceau by prefaces which sum up eloquently his conceptions of life; and they put into high relief the doctrines which inspired them. Thus the existence of the hard social battle, a fierce continuation of the struggle for life in all nature, the existence of the conflict of species, the law which he represents profoundly, finds it a corrective in human solidarity in the face of grief, of oppression, of poverty. The profound prefaces, stirring in their thought, have the value of manifestos. The preface of the *Grand Pan*, an impressive hymn to science and nature in which he has shown with so much poetry, his knowledge and his taste for Hellenism, is wonderfully eloquent.

With all of these lively discussions having as a



subject some event of the day, M. Clemenceau mixes stories with sudden, correct observations, sometimes mischievous and sometimes pathetic, in which he shows best his knowledge of humanity. This is when he has been able to express most freely his feelings for the country and the rural customs.

The fighter for ideas excels in bringing out a landscape with its form, its color, its rustling, its perfumes. The deep roads of Vendée have in him their faithful painter.

It is not only the corners of the earth full of memories for him that he is able to call forth with a stroke of the pen. He represents with the same truth in all their peculiar atmosphere, the villages and forests of Morvan, as well as different regions, where, in his too short stays, he has been able to grant himself the sweetness of observing feeling and listening to nature.

Having kept the habit since his youth, of understanding the mysterious silences of peasants, he reconstructs with clearness their state of mind. He makes them live as they are and speak as they express themselves. There is no affectation or gloominess about his descriptions of them; but only

their true sentiments and, through their merit of industrious, economical and patient beings, their funny little tricks for their own interest.

There is always the animosity of the strong against the weak in these stories, as in most of Clemenceau's pages, together with a pity which does not forbid a sly shaft of wit, and together with a revolt against oppression.

Such is the theme of his novel, *Les plus Forts*, published twenty years ago, when in very different social surroundings and setting, one finds his noble conception of life applied to a more brilliant form of the struggle for life.

In the hurly-burly of resounding campaigns and of his parliamentary activity M. Clemenceau still found time to write, under the title *Au pied du Sinaï*, a series of picturesque stories. He traced several silhouettes of Oriental Jews, with whom he had become familiar at Carlsbad and he gave himself up to his taste for sly observation, very much diverted by the peculiarity which he perceived.

Clemenceau completed these discussions of ideas, and impressions of nature and humanity, by studies of painters and sculptors in whose work he finds

what he prizes above all in the work of others and what he tries to put in his own work: human emotion, the thought and labor of the modern man, the setting and character, the love of to-day under the magic, flowing poetry of life.

That is why he hailed in turn in most eloquent pages the sculptor Constantin Meunier, who with such simple grandeur represented miners and lightermen at work; J.-F. Raffaëlli, painter of smoke, of rubbish heaps, and of people of the suburbs, and, later, of the streets and crowds of Paris; Claude Monet, who represents the most subtle atmosphere; Eugène Carrière, who expressed with such pathos the deep life of human beings.

This literary portrait of Clemenceau would not be complete if one did not mention the sympathetic curiosity with which, in the midst of so much reading and work, he interested himself, even after his return to parliament, in the work of the writers of to-day, the young and the unknown, as well as their famous elder brothers.

Every original creation interested him, no matter how obscure was the name with which it was signed. When current events gave him the opportunity, with

what pleasure he used the theses of these books in his daily articles as an argument in support of his own ideas!

In his weekly pamphlet *Le Bloc*, which he edited alone, and in which no one else ever wrote a line, and in which better than any other place he had the means of satisfying his intellectual activity, how many writers, unknown or famous, had the honor of seeing their works studied, discussed with sympathy or warmly praised by this lofty mind, happy to point them out as interesting examples of contemporary thought!

In the hours of this intense literary life, this Frenchman found, in the company of masters and in exercising the art to which he had devoted himself with such passion, new reasons to love his country better and to be proud of it.

If since his infancy many reasons, still more determining, had not instilled in his heart the love for his country, his admiration and his love for the French language would have made him a patriot.

Let us repeat the hymn with which he hailed the language in his toast at the banquet for Edmond de Goncourt, where the friends of the noble artist,

recognizing in Clemenceau a writer worthy of paying him homage, asked Clemenceau to speak. I still hear the strong accent of that act of faith when he said with emotion :

“Language of simplicity, of clearness, of truth, in which, like the most perfect mould of thought, the most subtle sensations, the most lofty conceptions, the noblest assertions are formulated spontaneously. Language of liberty, which awakened the world through the appeals of the liberated spirit, language of pity, of severe justice, of profound kindness, whence sprang the living spring of human solidarity. Language of friendship, language of love, whose natural harmony can, without the rhythm of verse, delight the soul on the heights of sublime emotion. Language adored by all those who feel it move within them, who live it. Language of our ancestors, language of the earth, language of our country. Yes, it is France herself, it is the glory of the past, and, in spite of evil hours, it is the unconquerable hope, the solid anchor of the future.”

Singing the praise of the French language, Cle-

menceau took occasion to speak with respect of the grandeur and nobility of the rôle of the writer:

‘The peasant tills the soil, the workman forges the tool, the scientist calculates, the philosopher dreams. Men attack each other in grievous battles for life, for ambition, for fortune or glory. But the solitary thinker, writing, acting, fixes their destiny. It is he who awakens in them sentiments which engender the ideas through which they live and which they try to establish as social realities. It is he who with his haunting phrases, pushes them into action to reestablish justice, truth. It is he who enchants them with his young hopes whose intoxicating appeal sweeps them into life. It is he who consoles them, remakes them, and healing their wounds, leads the conquered of yesterday to the victory of to-morrow. He opens hearts, penetrates life, reveals man to man, and truly creates him in his consciousness and will.

“To have been for one hour the workman of such a work, would suffice for the glory of a life.”

In speaking thus before one of the greatest masters of French literature, who incarnated so nobly the merit and the dignity of the writer, M. Clemen-

## THE ORATOR—THE WRITER

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ceau showed his pride and his joy of living in full liberty in the enchantment of creative exaltation, the beautiful life of a writer, which permitted him to continue his influence on men.

## VII

### AT THE FRONT

CAN one be astonished that from the first shots fired and the first charges of the Uhlans, a man of such a soul and of such a temper, participated in the war?

For a long time in an ever more anxious atmosphere of storm, he felt that the lightning was threatening to set the whole horizon on fire. In his journal and on the tribune, he sounded the alarm bell. After having helped to forge, by the law of three years' military service, the weapon of defense which we needed, he begged the young Frenchmen to resign themselves to being, for ten months longer, the shield of the country. Then, on the eve of the catastrophe which he felt was near, believing that there was still time, he had sounded a cry of alarm in the Senate in order that our output of munitions might be accelerated.

His haunting fear came true. Without reason,



in spite of our praiseworthy patience, Germany falls on us. Clemenceau, inconsolable for the defeat and invasion, sees again the nightmare by which he is obsessed since 1871. The German flood is again going to strike against our frontier. Can he not stem it?

Clemenceau hopes so. The spirit of the nation is wonderful. No more discords. The doctrines of renunciation are forgotten. Is it the same nation in which, at certain times of illusion, in certain quarters confused by ignorance, unfortunate men calumniated each other? Within twenty-four hours all France has risen, trembling with indignation. It is the spirit of 1792. They rush to arms for liberty. In the rending of its calm happiness, in the anxiety of battle near at hand, the whole country is admirable in its stoicism, resignation, confidence.

For Clemenceau, who is not in power and who intends to serve in his way during the tragedy in which the fate of France is being played, there is nothing to do, save inspire hearts.

With what emotion and with what eloquent pages he sets about it! Each one reads him to strengthen

his faith. It is truly the generous, tender, firm soul of the country which is wonderfully expressed under his pen. His inspired articles are among the pages which comfort best of all and do the most good. Those who go and those who stay, find in them new reasons for loving France more, for suffering, for sacrificing for her.

In spite of the lack and the insufficiency which he knows, Clemenceau hopes that heroism and intelligence will supplement our preparedness on certain points and that all will go well. He believes that they will get the best out of what there is and will be able to create with boldness and decision what is lacking.

Indeed, they set their minds to it. They work and improvise. Under the first terrible shock, after a strategic retreat, our armies rebound. The victory of the Marne and the rapid mobilization of French industries, to a great extent dispossessed of their factories, give the world time to come to our aid.

Yet, the machine is not running well. The reality of this terrible war surpasses everything which could be imagined or foreseen, without counting

the red tape and apathy. Of course, there were men whose careless mediocrity concealed in the easy tasks of peace, would be revealed in all its scandal and fatality as soon as war broke out. Again, time is necessary to discover them and oust them.

During the interregnum of the Chambers and the parliamentary Commissions which were not in session during the first weeks of the war, Clemenceau watches, observes, gets information. Already in the general silence, he begins his rôle of sentinel. Informed, he warns. As they do not listen to him as quickly as he would like, he redoubles the energy of his sentry duty. He talks more loudly. Thinking only of being useful, of avoiding delays and mistakes injurious to the country, he complains that they are mistaking his intentions and that they seem to want to stifle his entreaties.

Without criticising the conduct of the war, what does he point out? The bad organization, the poor means, the inability to change methods of the sanitary department which, surprised by the slaughter of these great unforeseen battles, and deranged by the retreat, does not adapt itself resolutely enough

to the proportions of the tragedy. Tortured and shuddering, Clemenceau, who knows the value of French blood, wants more efficient care provided for the wounded without delay. The doctor speaks for this, at the same time as does the patriot.

Then the baseness of slacking, favored by equally guilty complacency, disgusts him, shocks him, worries him. He knows that in a country like ours, where the equality of duty and danger should be the rule, nothing has so much power as these shameful subterfuges to demoralize people.

How will the mothers, wives, fiancées, bear the anxiety and perhaps the grief, if, in their neighborhood, there are too many families cunningly exempted from these sufferings? No longer believing in justice, will they have the power of resignation? It is to be feared that they will feel their courage fail them and break, by their rancor and by their complaints, the efforts of our defense. Then in his disgust and apprehension, Clemenceau rises against this cynicism of these sly deserters, pours forth vituperation on the accomplices and on the irresponsibility of their unmoral powers which protect cowardice.

This was a just campaign made necessary by a disgraceful tendency toward slackers on the part of some, in contrast with the enthusiastic rush to arms on the part of the country. When M. Clemenceau had become minister, he put his most intimate colleagues in charge of the hunting down of the disgraceful slackers. Unfortunately, in spite of everything, many were able to take refuge in so-called war-work and were sheltered by laws which made this comedy of theirs legitimate. When the two chambers began to sit again, M. Clemenceau found in the Commission of the Senate, which immediately set methodically and seriously to work, a new means of carrying on his activity against this abuse. Henceforth, he had not merely his journal *L'Homme Libre* to point out weakness and slowness. (*L'Homme Libre* was cut to pieces every day by the censor's scissors and sometimes its publication was stopped. As a protest, he changed the name of this journal to *L'Homme Enchaîné*.)

As a member and then the president of the Commission of External Affairs of the Senate, he was able to take advantage of the frequent appearance

of the ministers before these Commissions, to give them precise facts, to demand that these mistakes be remedied, to demand rigorous measures of preservation.

With all his ardent soul, with all his clear reason, exclusively applied to the safety of France, he participates in the work of national defense.

From the first weeks, he saw that the war would be very long and that we should arm ourselves as if it were going to be very much longer. He wants programs for the manufacture of munitions quickly drawn up on a large scale, corresponding to the necessities of modern warfare.

Speaking in the name of a Senatorial Commission which is animated by the most intelligent patriotism, he thinks of our soldiers who are suffering and bleeding and who, badly equipped, have only their breasts to defend France.

Therefore how anxious he is to see coming out of the arsenals, the shops, without delay, material worthy of their bravery and able to render it efficient!

He insists, he presses, he is on guard against red-

tape and against the harmful *esprit de corps* which, distrustful and disdainful of unsanctioned initiative, discourages good intentions.

At the same time, in the Commission of External Affairs he checks up the official statements by the private information which his colleagues and he procure. All working together, they try to perceive and to propose the best measures for the diplomatic conduct of the war.

Thus, since the beginning, without respite and without stopping, with nothing but solicitude for the public welfare, he consecrated all his activity to national defense.

He knows every lack, all the problems that arise day by day, all the fortunate or unfortunate attempts, failures as well as successes, the progressive struggle for the greater output of munitions, the ups and downs of our relations with the Allies and the neutrals.

He is informed of everything. He has the figures and the smallest details in his memory. One can say that he understands absolutely all the parts of the mechanism of the war.

## THE TIGER OF FRANCE

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He is not satisfied with the information that comes to him. Not content with suggesting programs and with speeding up their realization, of getting information on the best employment of men and material placed at the disposition of the supreme command, he wishes to find out about it himself. As soon as he can he goes to the front.

In the haste of these rapid journeys, he stops a moment at Headquarters and talks with the chiefs. What old prejudices there may be against him! And yet one is glad to recall in what conditions eight years before, he had appointed General Foch Director of the War College, in spite of the foolish and ill-timed objections of a political order which were made. And he did this because, caring only for France, he intended to choose the man most capable of forming a group of the finest officers to defend her. One remembers also his firm attitude against the aggressive chicanery of Germany in regard to the deserters of Casablanca and his refusal to allow France to be humiliated.

Also he expresses himself with such frankness! Under his sarcastic harshness one feels such a love for his country and such cordial gratitude for those



## AT THE FRONT

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who serve it with all their heart and with intelligent energy!

They perceive that he listens, observes, questions, and discusses with calm lucidity. He does not hesitate to advance certain ideas when they show him that they are not correct. He wants people to speak to him with the same frankness which he brings into these conversations himself. He upholds just claims.

Finally his radiant patriotism, with its clear-sightedness, its firmness, and its hope, enchants those who approach him. It is the soul of France, proud, resolute, gayly courageous, which Clemenceau brings to the armies.

These conversations just behind the lines, are only brief halts in his trips to cantonments, trenches, the true goal of these journeys of investigation.

Gaitered, wrapped up in his heavy civilian coat, the felt hat, knocked in and pulled down over his face, Clemenceau, such an old nimble hunter, walks in the midst of the poilus. With a familiar power, of which no one dreams of taking advantage because he keeps a great dignity in his most affable good humor, he speaks to them. And he knows

how to make himself understood, whether he talks about the country or about victory. Not one of them would be tempted to murmur: "Hot-air artist." He has a manner. The most rebellious undergo the grip of his will and his warm heart.

Those who are most ill-disposed toward parliamentarians, in his presence are without distrust and without any thought of jeering. They have seen him very near bursting shells. They know that he is not afraid. He does not pose. He is cordial, spontaneous and bantering. He has the soul of the poilu. They adopt him.

He is Clemenceau! It does not make any difference that they have not always been in accord with him, they are none the less proud to look out of the loop-hole to be under the shell-fire not far away from this glorious comrade, with his big white mustache, former chief of the Government of France, who, like a brave sentinel, wishes to mount guard in the midst of the men of the line, and who, recalcitrant to the order of the men on the staff, always wants to go farther in order to see better.

Such indeed is his constant desire. He only thinks of dragging beyond the permitted limits the

officer that the chief of the sector has given him as a guide. And if it is the Commandant himself who accompanies him, he revolts more strongly against the orders which have come from higher up, against the prudence which, however, one is right in having.

Furious at feeling himself even in the lines, a man enchained, he protests, he uses all his jovial, authoritative and persuasive powers of seduction; but his efforts are vain against the obedience to orders and against the feeling of just and grave responsibility.

Then feigning more ill-humor than he has, he tries to pique the pride of his guardian:

"You are not obliged to accompany me!" he declares ironically with a gleam of mischief in his look.

The chief of the sector, very sorry at not being able to let this thoroughbred have his head, is very careful not to take this mischievousness as an offense, smiles but resists.

Worn out, he counsels his tormentor:

"I can't do anything about it. Telephone to general headquarters."

Here is Clemenceau, scolding, imperious, sar-

castic, at the telephone: Excessive precautions! They're holding him up! They don't let him see anything! Imaginary danger! And then what difference does it make!

One guesses from his more and more insistent and irritable replies that at the other end of the line the General or Colonel, with very deferential obstinacy, is strongly forbidding him.

Clemenceau knows that his insinuation is unjust and his smile proves it, but irritated at his powerlessness, he risks without conviction another blow straight at the pride of his distant interlocutor: he shouts over the wire with his cutting, sardonic voice: "Because the officers of the staff are often kept far away from the trenches is no reason for forbidding me access to them."

But there also they know him. They don't get angry. They are polite toward his ill-humor, but they resist.

With what rage, full of playfulness, he hangs up the receiver! Down deep in his heart he is full of respect for these officers, who, in spite of his authority and prestige and his sharpness, do not give way under orders.

But he is Premier, Minister of War. It is he who now gives orders. No one will hinder him perhaps from going where he wants to go? He does as he pleases.

He is the chief, that is to say, the man who is responsible. He wants to see how all the wheels of the enormous machine move, how and in what spirit his orders are executed.

He wishes to talk as much as possible with his generals, in whom he sincerely and gladly places confidence, and who are happy to have at their head a man of this kind. He feels the beneficence of intimate relations with them, talks man to man, apart from official documents and telephone calls. What misunderstandings, mistakes and slowness one can avoid by speaking with frankness. Unity of views and efforts is assured.

For the same reason he wishes to be as much as possible with the troops and talk simply and cordially with our soldiers, bring to them even in the lines the grateful heart of France, prove to them by his own presence in the zone battered by machine-guns, his kind solicitude.

Comfort them? Not at all. They have no need

of that. Their bravery is all energy, all boldness. For so long a time their stoical soul has known resignation.

But perhaps they will not be indifferent at seeing, at the turn of a road swept by shell-fire, or some corner of the trench, when they are going to the front, the glorious old man in a roar of the storm of shells.

From their words and their looks he feels that his appearance among them gives them pleasure. Being sure of this he considers it his duty not to neglect this way of helping the country. That is the reason that he replies only with a smiling gesture of resolution to his many friends who are worried over this adventurous roaming about under skies laden with steel.

If he goes to the front lines it is not only because he thinks that his visits are useful. It is also because, at grips with most terrible difficulties, he himself finds the greatest comfort in this atmosphere of enthusiasm, of sacrifice and of heroism.

It is a sacred atmosphere where, in the suffering and the perpetual peril, the greatest virtues shine

forth. With what simplicity! What a total disregard of unimportant preoccupations! At every moment the best in man is shown there. Never, at any time, in any country, has there been more moral beauty. The noblest idealism upholds their strength. All this without caring for their attitude, without any claim of sublimity, with a frankness in regard to the little, usual weaknesses, in the picturesque carelessness which often accompanies the valor of our poilus.

Then he, the man of action, the chief of the government, who, in order not to relax his terrible effort, needs to live in faith and in hope, with what relief he comes to steep himself in this mighty mass of humanity exalted by its sacrifice which will perhaps never be found again in this paroxysm of renunciation and of noble ardor.

Clemenceau brings back as much moral force as he takes there.

Back of the lines, even if the great majority of Frenchmen keep their souls proudly open to hope and share in saving the country, stoicism and grandeur do not always exist. In this immense collective work, in which we should all be proud to be

humble, nameless workers, there are those who do not succeed in controlling themselves enough to forget themselves. There are falterings, vanities, intrigues which, far away from danger, are not effaced under the red badge of courage. One finds, together with abnegation, devotion, eager, confident patriotism, egoism, cupidity, cynical ambition, infamy, low-minded profiteering, crime.

Near the garden of virtues there is the muck-heap of ugliness and shame. There are pestilential emanations of which the least among us must beware. It is all the more necessary for the responsible leader to preserve all his lucid firmness, all his power for action, and he must neglect nothing to maintain his strength.

What a refreshing tonic are these visits to the front when, in spite of the hardness of such a life in the mud, the blood and in the hail of steel, in spite of the strokes of the terrible Reaper, Death, hearts are radiant with hope. Let us not doubt Clemenceau, so filled with admiration and gratitude for the wonderful halo which emanates from them.

Clemenceau carries on the war with the soul of a



warrior. He studies, of course, reports, dispatches, statistics with great care. But he never loses from sight the reality: the men beyond the piles of official papers. He thinks of them when figures are given to him. When theories are submitted to him he wonders, no matter how correct and brilliant they are, how the men in the horizon-blue uniforms will react to them.

Then he wishes to see and find out about the results, without taking into consideration a lack of synchronism between the front and the rear.

Neither the liaison officers nor the telephone were sufficient to keep them in unison. It is good that the chief, if he knows how to watch, to persuade, to be obeyed, should institute himself the high liaison officer between the nation and the army and, that, well informed and zealous servant of the country, he should make his voice heard in Parliament and at Headquarters.

That is why Clemenceau, applying more than ever his method since he has been in power, goes to the front as soon as he can get a day off or merely an evening between conferences and committee meetings, and important meetings of Parliament.

He goes at full speed toward the zone of the Allies. His little soft hat, his large white mustache and his sharp black eyes may be seen behind the window of the automobile.

As he goes by, people recognize him. They attempt a salute when the speed of the car allows it. If not, they smile and without knowing each other they feel the need of pointing out to each other, by a gesture or by a word, the presence of Clemenceau.

The crowd loves his activity, his picturesque good-fellowship, and his bantering ways. People are glad to say to themselves that the sentinel is on careful guard.

In the auto, beside the Minister of National Deliverance is one of the most energetic and intelligent men of the young army: General Mordacq, chief of the military cabinet, with six palms on his war-cross, his fifth stripe and his stars won on the field of battle. He is just the kind of a helper needed by Clemenceau. He is industrious, has a clear mind, a strong character, acts with decision, speaks only when he has something to say.

Clemenceau works on the way. He does not start out without his portfolio. If he has not docu-

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ments under his eyes, he has the figures and all the details clearly engraved in his memory. It is a precious occasion to reflect and discuss without the perpetual uproar of the whirlwind entrances, visits and telephone calls.

To what sector is he going?

Where they fought yesterday, that is to say where there is heroism to glorify and wounds to heal, sorrow to console, for the empty spaces in the ranks oppress the hearts which survive.

Where they will fight to-morrow, because on the eve of the "*Day*" it is a good thing to make those, who are going to risk all for France, know she is with her defenders with all her tender and strong soul.

Where they are fighting to-day. In the uproar of shells and the hell of the mad attack. There the men are sustained by the feeling of duty, of honor, of all the nobleness, of all the charms, of all the beautiful hopes that France represents in their eyes. They are exalted by the memory of their wives, their fathers, the home which must be preserved for the future. They rush into the hurricane of fire, struggle on the ground, fight one against the other.

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Is it not well that they should see the chief, that they would hear his warm words, shake his friendly hand, when going into the furnace and when haggard, worn out, still trembling with the superhuman act, they come out of the lines?

The shells fall near by. Two minutes before the windows of his auto were broken.

Just now the divisional staff was up in the air because the Minister having gone his own way, they did not know in what trenches he was walking and whether anything had happened to him.

Perhaps at this time the victorious march of the victorious French armies, followed by the general advance of the Belgian, British and American armies, has made this personal contact less necessary.

Since the days in June when Mangin threw back the Prussian Guard, since the fifteenth of July, the great day of the stolid stand of Gouraud in Champagne, the great breath of victory has exalted the heart and brought joy and hope into the terrible effort. Gouraud's stand made possible the liberating movement so masterfully conceived by Foch, Petain, and Fayolle, so masterfully executed by

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Mangin, Humbert, Debeny, under the orders of Fayolle himself, by Degoutte and Berthelot under the command of Maistre. But in March, April, May, June, how many dark days there were, where, while the reserves were barring the road to Paris, it was absolutely necessary to have the ardor of Clemenceau burning at the front.

Those who were in the furnace can bear witness to the happy effect of his frequent presence and his comforting talk. It was France, invincibly confident and resolved not to die which was expressing herself in his words.

Nothing ever betrays his anxiety before the men who were dominated by his faith, his will, his hope. He showed the magnificent good-humor, the witty joviality, the calm which he maintains in the most critical days. In his low, jerky voice there was only a little more emotion which made his appeal more impressive.

How well he knows how to appear before our soldiers, with a resolute affability, which immediately breaks the ice, and how well he knows how to speak to them with a cordial brusqueness!

The politeness with which he accompanies his

spontaneous good-fellowship does not fail to surprise them agreeably. He has his own way of approaching them.

If he meets a troop on the march or at rest, with his cane along his arm and his hands in his pockets of his overcoat, he salutes them with a clear:

"How do you do, Gentlemen!"

Astonishment among the soldiers. Military discipline hardly allows such greetings.

This is no affectation in Clemenceau. If he uses this phrase it is because it corresponds to his feelings.

He knows that in the ranks of the French army, men of all classes and professions rub elbows. Thinkers are lined up with workers; peasants are near merchants; employees are with lawyers. He is full of respect for these citizen-soldiers who endure, with so much resignation and such long bravery, suffering and incessant danger.

He knows their life, the charming happiness, the delightful customs of which it is composed. He thinks of the work, the charms, the pleasures which they have renounced without complaining for four years. He appreciates the hard sacrifice which they

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are all making for their country; the man of the fields homesick for his plowing and his animals; the city man deprived of his elegance and his comfort; the scholar who has left his books; the man of affairs taken from his business.

Above all, he knows what has been accomplished by the greatest soldiers France has ever had and all that we owe them.

He attempts to render their efforts less trying. He does not cease to watch personally over the material comfort of their heroism.

But that is not enough. As he admires them, as he has vowed to them the most affectionate gratitude, he tries to make them feel it on every occasion.

"They have rights over us!" This is a great idea which, in one of his pithy sayings, he expressed publicly as a program of gratitude.

Having shown by this personal salutation in what great esteem he holds them and with what feelings he speaks to them, he talks to them man to man, with a familiar joviality. His frankness calls out frankness, and in this, as everywhere, he has a witty thrust, sometimes caustic, which amuses them. It

is an agreeable covering which he gives to his reason and good sense.

Then on certain difficult days, with a sudden flight of oratory of striking simplicity, he makes the thrill of noble enthusiasm pass through their whole being. It is the country which sends them to the attack through the emotional voice of this inspiring man.

He is certainly playful, full of good-fellowship, wittily familiar; but he has such dignity and so great a power of mind even in his most intimate friendly talks, that the greatest lout would not have the slightest temptation to be disrespectful.

While talking heart to heart, in a friendly tone which is humorous on occasions, Clemenceau remains the chief.

And suddenly with an inspiring word, comprehensible to the most simple souls, he recalls the duty with which he is invested. He carries his soldier's stripes in his brain and character.

Everywhere he passes, so free and easy and so simple, his presence brings pleasure and excites enthusiasm. People rush to hear him, to shake his hand. They try to find in the midst of the ruins,



in the "bush," in the torn up ground some symbol of the feelings which they have for him.

For example, a little while ago in the famous "mountains" to the east of Reims, which almost in his presence had been snatched from the invader, our poilu was happy to see him in such a place at such a moment, seeking in this landscape, pock-marked like the surface of the moon, some simple flowers which gave the illusion of a tri-color bouquet.

With what joy they offered it to Clemenceau, who was very much moved at the receipt of these flowers picked in such a place by men who had just conquered it!

In the hospitals at the front, where he stops as much as possible to comfort the wounded, in the hospitals back of the lines, which he visits sometimes, he finds immediately the comforting words and intonations.

A room which he has traversed is a room where for several instants pain seems less sharp and sorrow is certainly quieted.

There, the doctor which Clemenceau was and still is a little, appears in the minister. His words in-

investigate and care for their health before they cheer them up.

Therefore, grateful looks follow him when he goes away, and if by chance at the head of the bed he meets the father, the mother or the wife of the poor wounded man, how he knows how to win their heart and with what soothing tones he consoles them and gives them hope! What moving scenes of this kind were reported by witnesses!

With the officers the same outburst of gratitude and affectionate respect, the same rapid penetration of hearts, an equal love for France brings them together instantly. They know up to what point his efforts are stretched toward victory, and with what solicitude he surrounds their soldiers. Like the soldiers, the officers say that this grand old man, henceforth above all ambition, desires nothing, seeks nothing for himself, lives only for the liberation of his country and for its complete triumph which alone can guarantee our children a long security in the future.

He knows that these are the same men as their poilus. They run the same risks, often even more.

Honor and responsibility impose obligation. On the days of attack, standing up first on the parapet of the trench and marching at the head of their company, of their battalion, they are by their very position more exposed to the shots of the enemy. Magnificent in their calmness, their energy, their enthusiasm, an example with the smiling elegance of their stoicism, they have been mowed down by tens of thousands.

Most of them have come up from the ranks. In the unit in which they were serving, in the midst of their comrades they won their stripes by their bravery and almost always by the price of their blood.

Those who, having had the time to be educated in the military schools before the cataclysm, have survived forty-eight months of slaughter, have led the same heroic hard life. These young ancestors are very rare to-day. They are all of equally strong steel.

The sole difference between officers and soldiers is, in general, better education, fitness to command which comes from mastery over oneself, and a preponderant part in danger, since the officer, on whom the eyes of all his men are fixed at every hour,

must go over the top ahead, stand up in order that his men may lie down and expose himself first to the hurricane of fire.

In almost all of our regiments for four years and a half, five times, eight times, ten times, the staff of officers has been renewed. Scarcely in one division on the battle line, does one find five or six captains or lieutenants who already had their golden bars at the beginning of the war. Also the stripes on their left arm bear witness that they only have been half spared.

Clemenceau realizes that it is to such a precious, select body of men chosen during the torment, magnificent for their moral value, energy and spirit, that one owes, in great part, the long resignation of our armies, their untiring spirit, our victories, and the maintenance of the sublime state of soul which has given them to us. He appreciates their merit and their sacrifices. He is grateful to them for their great rôle of the safeguarding of France.

Without doubt he is one of those who think that after having erected symbolic statues to the picturesque and stoical poilus, the saviors of the country, we shall not in this way have paid all our debt if

we do not erect on some Paris square a monument to the admirable infantry officer, glorious martyr, rushing to death at the head of his soldiers, and to his brother in heroism and endurance, his faithful companion of the first lines, of the nerve-racking bombardment of the big guns, the officer of the trench-mortars.

Clemenceau is happy in the midst of such men. He is glad to listen to them, to speak to them, and to let them feel his gratitude and respect.

And these brave leaders give him a hearty welcome. Immediately their will for victory is in communion with his ardor.

The youth of this astonishing old man makes them marvel. His spirit is in unison with their enthusiasm and their gayety. Therefore, they are eager as soon as he appears.

And when the chance of his wandering seats him at breakfast at their mess, the half hour passed around him is enchanting. His playful and brilliant vitality conquers them, his faith exalts them.

It is he, however, who feels himself their debtor because of the moral force that emanates from the assemblies of these young heroes, and, also, because

of the great increase in confidence and hope which he brings away from them.

Much direct evidence made it my duty to note the impression which his air and his words leave on these officers, free in their judgment, the most of them of a savage independence, who each day coming back from afar, are not dazzled either by fame or by office and only speak thus because they think thus.

The great leaders of our armies, the generals, the commanders of units, know that under his orders they do their duty in full security.

Their minister is hard but frank. With him there is neither slyness nor cowardliness to be feared.

Head of the government, he conducts the war; but he does not interfere in the details of operations. There is never any irresolution nor haggling.

When a maneuver has been decided upon, it is carried out to the end. Even when it does not give all the results that one hoped, if those who have executed it are not responsible for its failure by

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some stupid mistake, Clemenceau, firm and loyal, protects them. He is not the man to lighten his responsibilities by the choice of scapegoats. His uprightness condemns such subterfuges to which he would never have recourse.

He places the greatest confidence in those whom he considers worthy, and does so until he has been so deceived that he begins to fear for the success of his work of liberation.

He shows himself pitiless only for carelessness, folly, and blameworthy thoughtlessness. Then for the safety of the country he does not hesitate before any punishment as hard as it may be.

All these great leaders of war, which war has made, or whose previous advancement the war has justified, love his resoluteness, his energy, and his strength.

They feel themselves at ease with him, the charm of his good humor works upon them also. No minister is less solemn. Man of action himself, he understands men of action. He has their soul. He knows how to speak to them, and his patriotic passion accords with theirs.

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He has the same cordial frankness with the generals of the Allied armies. M. Clemenceau visits them often. Attentive to all their efforts, he does not fail to tell them with what sympathy France follows the development as well as the results. They like his energy and his good humor. They do not conceal how much they are pleased by his clear-sightedness, his resoluteness, and also by his original fancy which, even expressed in English, keeps all its charm of spontaneity.

The chief of our government speaks English with much ease. By this bond, intimacy becomes closer and easier. So many misunderstandings can be thus avoided. And the hearts of all of these men, so different, overflow with feelings so alike, that they feel a real joy to be able to communicate without an interpreter their fervor and their hope.

Just as Clemenceau admires their boldness and as his uprightness is at ease in the presence of their loyalty, they like his clear conceptions, his lofty reason and the rigorousness of his logic. They have confidence in him and seem always to take pleasure in seeing him. Among our allies, his gift as an inspirer of men, is strongly appreciated. Confidence,



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sympathy, personal influence, together with the danger that he has run, explain the success of his intervention at tragic hours.

The unity of command, indispensable for victory, existed in fact, in a certain measure, under the glorious command of the victor of the Marne. But the principle had never been formally recognized. At the departure of Marshal Joffre this very desirable unity was broken in practice.

Our enemies knew marvellously how to profit by the weakness which resulted from the lack of cohesion. Many times the peril had appeared to clear-sighted minds, but they tried in vain to remedy it. It was, alas, only in the face of catastrophe that prejudices gave way, that pride consented to listen to reason.

Suddenly after years of relative security, the formidable German waves rolling from the Russian frontier, sweeping along an immense quantity of material, as they passed the garrisons of the depots, were in danger of submerging everything.

They are pouring in all together at the most vulnerable point and the scattered condition of our forces does not permit the rapid barrage which

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would make them flow back. During two days the road to Paris is practically open. The whole mass is likely to be able to rush through the breach.

Hours of the greatest danger which France and civilization have run since 1914. Days and nights of anxiety! Those who read on the map the terrible threat have not yet told all the fear with which they were panting.

In the midst of these powerful waves, whose fury was carrying everything along, Clemenceau, calm as always in battle when he can act, calls the ministers and the generals of the Entente to a council for the supreme resolutions.

Are they going to compromise, through childish obstinacy, the future of humanity? His patriotism has such accents, his reason speaks so loftily and so clearly, his ardor so sets on fire their hearts, that soon, with Foch aiding, they are convinced, hearts are won, all resistance is broken. From the little house of Doullens with its great historic scene past the unity of command was realized once for all. That day the barbarian was struck down.

History will tell later the details of that decisive day. It does honor to all of those who played a

rôle. But one can believe that the pressing, moving argument of M. Clemenceau was aided by the confidence which he had inspired for a long time in his interlocutors, by the sympathy of his firm character, and the loftiness of spirit his mind had awakened in them.

Now on the roads of the front, he is constantly going toward Germany and to-morrow he will pass our frontiers. He encounters, among the ruins, in their cities and in their villages systematically devastated, the French population held in slavery for four years, hungry, put up for ransom, victims of humiliations, of butcheries and of nameless outrages, which the soldiers of the Entente have just freed from the German yoke.

His heart bleeds. Forty years ago he had promised to do everything so that the soul of the country should not be outraged again, so that the soil of the country should not be sullied again. Now he sees again, with what aggravations of tortures, of anguish, of misery, the frightful, the grievous spectacle. He, the enemy of all violence, sees the most

atrocious proofs of voluntary violence, useless and cruelly refined in its horror.

As soon as our tricolor floats anew over the recaptured cities, he goes there. Passing in the midst of the soldiers of liberty who continue their victorious march while singing, he rushes to these old men, these women, these children, finally snatched from servitude and torture.

These moments of first meeting are poignant. The heart beats as if it would break. Here, at the edge of the village, at the turn of a city street, are our compatriots, intoxicated at feeling they are free. Emaciated, in the midst of the ruins, bearing the marks of their long torture which they have borne so stoically, weeping for their dead and for the hostages driven away by butts of guns toward the tombs of German jails, they await France, they come to meet France. In spite of so much grief and misery their hearts are radiant with joy as their skeletons of houses are decked with flags.

While awaiting the president, M. Raymond Poincaré, who will be there to-morrow and whose patriotism will know how to speak to these grief-stricken freed slaves, a comforting language, France

comes to them, cordial, tender and warm, in the person of M. Clemenceau.

He is too firm ever to have tears in his eyes, but his low, broken voice betrays his emotion. It is rumbling with restrained sobs. Then suddenly pulling himself together, Clemenceau wants it to vibrate with happiness, with hope, with faith. For this liberated region the nightmare is over. While, under the flash of our cannon, it is disappearing elsewhere, here it is necessary to think from this day on, of the future, to prepare it, to rebuild the city for future generations for which, in the most terrible battle, our soldiers are winning the necessary security.

What does he say to these trembling people, drunk with the happiness of no longer feeling that they are slaves and with having found again maternal France whom all, perhaps, did not believe to be so sweet and dear.

☪ Scarcely has he spoken to them ardent and affectionate words, which are like an embrace, when he invites them to the immediate work of reconstruction. He calls them to work because he knows that with France in ruins no one has a right to be

lazy and that, after so much suffering, laziness might be a bad counselor. That is his first word. Indeed never was work more necessary.

This churned-up earth, these piled-up ruins, these long perspectives of desolation which he has had to traverse to reach this part of France, have made M. Clemenceau reflect on our past errors and on the work of resurrection.

He thinks of the salutary efforts from which political quarrels have sometimes turned us away, of the unbelievable waste of energy caused too often by political hatreds.

These vast cemeteries where lie so many young heroes who have sacrificed themselves to pay for our mistakes, to save the country compromised by our discords, these interminable visions of distress which overwhelm the heart, dictate to him moving words of tolerance and of social harmony.

In a feeling of pity for France and for ourselves, let us not add through grudges, suspicion and the violence of our internal struggles, weakness to so much death, hatred to so much grief.

Companions in sorrow and anguish, let us love one another, let us respect one another!

Ought not this unheard of cataclysm to be a beginning of a new era?

At Lille, at Tourcoing, at Roubaix, among these people who welcome him with the *Marseillaise* and who rush to this fervent old man who brings them the spirit of French hearts, with a grave melancholy but also with much joy and hope, as soon as the first words of meeting are exchanged he says, on the spur of the moment:

"Henceforth we must be more than ever united against the enemy, at first to finish the work of the war, and then to harness ourselves to the equally difficult work of peace.

"The ancient republics were destroyed through internal dissension. We have almost suffered the same fate. May the terrible war which leaves far behind all that we have seen in history, even the wars of the revolution, serve as a lesson for us. Let us have our differences of opinion; let each have his preferences, but let us respect the opinions of others; may there be none but Frenchmen, all brothers, communing in the same love for the country.

"Let us think of France. We have not always

been models of wisdom. We must realize the union of all citizens. We must not ask any one to give up his convictions. Let us put into practice the device, *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity*, graven on all our monuments. Thus will the work of peace be achieved as soon as the punishment of the Boches is assured."

The memory of numberless graves by which he so often passed during four years, the terrible haunting fear of this abominable destruction, the wails of the victims crying vengeance will inspire M. Clemenceau when, in the name of country, he will outline the necessary conditions in order that the sword of France may be sheathed.

After having sworn the oath in 1871 not to bow before force, to remain faithful to Alsace-Lorraine and never renounce the reparation of the crime, he has surely sworn to himself the new oath to neglect nothing in order that France, trampled four times in an hundred years, bloody, covered with ruins, may never have to fear again such wounds.

Possessing great popularity as head of the Gov-



ernment, he is responsible to future generations for our future security.

Knowing marvellously all our history and all our traditions unchangeable through all the political upheavals, he knows all the precautions which are indispensable to protect the West of Europe against the Teutonic flood, to keep the peace of the world from being at the mercy of a madness for world power and rapine, to allow the noble ideal of France, humane and just, to be realized in happy labor and in peace.

His patriotism will give him the force to demand all the collective and individual punishment of the authorities who made of our country a land of horror. He will demand all the reparation in money, machinery, material and labor, for the ravages systematically carried out. He will insist upon all the restitutions in annual payments in gold, wood, coal, etc., and especially upon the rigorous guarantees which will remove from the nation the German army and will keep it from being reconstituted.

All his speeches in regard to this are so many solemn promises which will help to give us, in

tears, in anxiety, in grief, the courage to suffer and to struggle.

For the realization of this promise, M. Clemenceau is in perfect accord with M. Raymond Poincaré, president of the Republic, whose proud and firm words have strengthened us by the same promises, with the energetic declarations, so ardently French, of M. Antonin Dubost, interpreter of the will of the Senate, with the eloquent speeches of M. Paul Deschanel, interpreter of the feelings of representatives of the nation.

France wants justice to be done and her future to be saved.

Then, when the treaty of peace shall have been dictated to Germany under the ruined arches of the cathedral of Reims—a symbol of all the dishonorable destruction uselessly carried out by these vile people—when peace shall have been signed at Versailles in the same *Galérie des Glaces* where, in 1871, German unity was triumphantly proclaimed in the form of the Empire established, not for peace but for conquest, when our victorious soldiers shall have passed under the Arc de Triomphe to receive the

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homage of the nation whose great citizens they shall become, then, quietly, his hat cocked on the side of his head, his cane over his shoulder, the great Minister of National Deliverance will go to his little apartment in *Rue Franklin* where he has thought so much for France, where he has worked so much for her.

He will find again his wonderful books which have taught him so much, the books of contemporary writers which help him to understand the present better, the books of young writers which he never neglected and which make him foresee the morrow.

The famous hat with earlaps, his hunter's cap, which during the most terrible of hunts, sometimes on his head, sometimes rolled between feverish fingers, will have been present at so many famous interviews, will take up the dance before the blank paper.

The little knocked-in hat, with the brim pulled down, will only be used on rare days when he walks in the woods.

And doubtless toward three o'clock in the morning, Clemenceau, impatient to follow, hour by hour,

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the reorganization of the world, the reawakening of French activity, the achievement in peace of the work accomplished by him in war, will go with the same haste to lift up his door-mat to find—before they arrive—the latest dispatches in order to think over and write sooner his article for the day.

May he be able to give it to us for a long time still, in order that France may know how to profit by her victory and may not be conquered in her triumph by a renewal of her mistakes.

May he then with an increase in authority which his glorious service to France will give him, write, for the teaching of all citizens, the book on Democracy of which he has often spoken to his intimate friends. He will bring to it all his experience of men, institutions and customs. He will tell what a free people ought to do to harmonize order and liberty, to quicken its reason, to spare the fearful waste of its forces, to give workers more benefit of their labor, to assure a better continuity of effort and power, to give a better moral life to the country, to give it a more just sense of the real while developing its idealism, to assure it, by better teach-

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ing, an education indispensable to one who wishes to be worthy of liberty.

After the war, if he wishes to stay out of politics, with his pen, Clemenceau can still serve France by one of the means of expression over which he has acquired such mastery.

Let him aid the French democracy, to establish the reign of reason, liberty, justice from which she is still so far removed and in which each one, not demanding rights which encroach upon the rights of others, will acquit himself, punctiliously and without any constraint except the moral law, of the corresponding duties.

Without this, the Republic is only the deceiving parody of a high ideal.

Let us hope especially that M. Clemenceau, because he still has duties toward the country, will be willing to render us the supreme service not in leaving us in writing the testament of his experience, and of his meditations, but of organizing in the government itself, the industrial awakening of France and its political life in the peace he will have won for us.

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### THE ARMISTICE SAVES THE BEATEN GERMAN ARMY

**W**RITTEN during the days of supreme effort, I am finishing this book when the hoped-for victory, for which we have made such sad sacrifices, has at last recompensed France's stoicism, consoled her for her mourning, precluded the possibility of her resting buried beneath her civilization's glorious ruins. Victory's light shines in our eyes, wet with tears after so much mourning and anguish. Victory's wings beat above the banners of triumph and joy which, since the sound of the cannon announcing our deliverance, fly joyously from every window.

Not only France, but the world's liberty, mankind's peaceful future, are saved—things for whose

\* Translated By John L. B. Williams.

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safety the most free and peaceful peoples of the world have stood united.

And Clemenceau, the flame of whose energy has inspired all hearts, whose foresight and faith have put new life into the forces of the Entente and the United States, too scattered until he came, enjoys the supreme recompense of seeing the beaten barbarians submit to victorious Right, of seeing France and civilization henceforth free from the German menace.

His heart, never trembling even in the worst days, gives way to the sweetness of this resurrection. The old man who stoically steeled himself so long against every weakness and tenderness lets his tears flow. He weeps for joy; he weeps at the recollection of all the suffering and sorrow which have paid for this triumph. So overcome is he with happiness and compassion that he does not think of hiding his tears.

"I can die now," he says with poignant sincerity to the men who come near him in victory's first moments.

To bring about this victory he had assembled and

exerted all his strength. He had asked to live only until this supreme moment came.

Now that France and all the world are safe, he feels justified in resting from such a terrible effort of will and even in closing his eyes on the vision of Peace.

But to build a solid foundation for the future of the free peoples, to realize the benefits of the victory Justice has won, M. Clemenceau's clear-sighted firmness is still essential to the councils of the French Government and also, in perfect unison with the resolute firmness of the allied plenipotentiaries, to the meetings of the Peace Conference. Let us rejoice that M. Clemenceau's heart, which the weight of war and anguish could not break, did not break for joy when peace came.

After a time of mortal danger when, on two occasions, March and May, 1918, all seemed lost, Victory appeared for the first time on the evening of our national fête day, that terrible night of July fourteenth-fifteenth, 1918, when Paris, breathless with anxiety, heard the roar of furious cannonades as General Gouraud's unconquerable soldiers stopped the German rush. Then, on July eighteenth, Vic-



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tory shone forth brighter than ever when, under General Fayolle and his officers, well worthy of having such a commander—Generals Mangin, Humbert and Debeney—our troops, assisted by American and Italian soldiers, broke the enemy's lines.

Little by little, week by week, Victory came nearer, with a force that was irresistible, under the genial inspiration of Marshal Foch, commander-in-chief of the Entente's armies, thanks to the clear and methodical science of war evidenced by Marshal Pétain, to the skillful maneuvering of his colleagues, Generals Maistre, Degoutte and Berthelot, to name only the most famous, and to the Belgian army, electrified by the presence of its King, that true knight. And as the American armies with their brave, well equipped men (under General Pershing, whose noble, simple modesty equals that of American history's greatest men) entered the fray valiantly and enthusiastically, the German retreat was hastened on every front.

Demoralized by severe checks following too great hopes, by the continuous attacks of the free allies, by sudden assaults that were everywhere successful, which followed one another rapidly in different

places and against different positions and which gave them no respite, the German armies—still fighting but invariably beaten—retreated day after day.

In Flanders and at Saint-Mihiel, on the Oise and in Champagne, in the Argonne, on the Piave, Victory followed our flags. But when will worn-out and defeated Germany realize hopeless disaster? When will she admit this fact to herself and to other nations? Will winter come before her leaders responsible for this monstrous enterprise capitulate to us and to their people, unless the disbanding of their armies forces them to it?

At that very moment Bulgaria falls under Franchet d'Esperey's blows. His master strokes carry out General Guillaumat's plans. Turkey, worn out by suffering and hopeless sacrifices, follows Bulgaria's lead. These disasters prove to Germany—and to the rest of the world—that her cause is lost.

For eighteen months past Austria has not had courage enough to follow up her desire for peace. She feels that the game is up, and, to gain a little indulgence, decides to accept any terms she can get, on knees bended in thankfulness.

A sign of the times! A certain proof of Vic-

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tory! Now the end indeed begins. For years M. Clemenceau has been acting rather than speaking and, great orator that he is, has been condemning himself to silence. He mounts the tribune to announce the armistice with Austria and to make its conditions known. He is careful to state, first of all, that even if deliverance is at hand, we are none the less not at the end of the war, and that great efforts may still be necessary to bring that about. But later, when Victory is a certainty, with what greatness of mind and what spirit of Justice he speaks for France, for her allies, of his own part, recognizing the faults and mistakes he has made:

"Let me tell you," he says first of all, in response to the applause, "I am not worthy of so much homage. What I have done, France has done. Through you she has willed it, and through you I have been able to do it.

"They told us we wanted war. Yes, we wanted it, after Germany attacked us, but we wanted it to insure a just peace with its necessary guarantees.

"Men who have seen with their own eyes what the Germans have done in the invaded territory will understand that, after such crimes, it is out of

the question for us not to demand guarantees that will prevent these things from happening again.

"This is the most formidable war the world has ever seen. With the advance of armaments, with scientific progress and the interest entire peoples now take in hurling themselves into battle to obtain their rights, I ask you what they would become, what all the human race would become, if they were exposed to future wars surpassing all those which we have seen. I do not want to see this, and I need not say that no man wants it. Words are beautiful, deeds are difficult, cruel, sad, at times. . . .

"It must be said. If we had not had allies in this war we could not have triumphed. No single one of the allies could have triumphed without the assistance of the others. In some quarters that statement will appear, perhaps, to diminish our glory: but in that very fact I see a better chance for mankind's future.

"We have made friends with our old enemies, the English. We love them. For we see the prodigies of valor they have done on our battlefields.

"The Minister of Foreign Affairs and the President of the Chamber of Deputies have just ren-

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dered their homage to glorious Belgium, to noble Italy, to Greece and to Serbia, as well as to all the new born peoples who are about to find themselves relieved from the frightful yoke and who, thanks to us and to our allies, are about to live again for the true glory, that of Justice and Liberty.

"I do not speak of the United States of America, our friends of long standing. When they came to our country we were already friends, we have found each other again.

"Our alliance for war must be followed by an unbreakable alliance for peace.

"The peoples of the world have come to realize that all their interests are one.

"We have won the war. Perhaps we shall have to wait for some time for the peace that is to follow it. But henceforth destiny has fixed for an indefinite time the fortunes not only of France but of all the countries that are worthy of Liberty.

"Let us unite! Let us continue our discussions of ideas, but let these discussions cease when France's interests are at stake.

"Let me tell you this. Truly it is necessary that we be humanitarian, but it is necessary that we be

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Frenchmen first of all. It is necessary that we be Frenchmen because France represents a conception of idealism, of humanity which has prevailed throughout the world, and because it has never been possible to serve humanity without France's being present.

"The time has come when great and magnificent victory's dawn breaks, when our thoughts turn towards the ends of union and fraternity. This is what I would ask you. And if any one wishes to know who has asked it of you, you may say France herself has done so. You will not be alone in this great humanitarian crusade, for we have all carried on our part of the struggle. Also at this crusade's end, I should like to change slightly our ancestors' formula and to have us promise that we shall be brothers in the word's true meaning, and that, if we are asked who has inspired us with this thought, we answer, 'France wills it, France wills it!' "

These are the noble and simple words of a man who, disdainful of oratorical artifice, interrogates his conscience to express with emotion all the

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thoughts which, in that moment of patriotic expression, rise from his serene heart.

When, in the midst of applause which will not stop, M. Clemenceau descends from the tribune, the Chamber of Deputies, which has been standing for several minutes to show its gratitude to him, crowds around him, while continuing its applause, to escort him to his seat. And in the midst of hands stretched out towards his or waved about his face, Clemenceau makes his way through the interminable ovation, calm, grave, modest, making in reply to this enthusiasm the gesture of cordial protest which is habitual to him.

Already shattered by four months of uninterrupted defeat, the German army and the German nation feel themselves incapable of further sacrifices. The people at home, who have lost all hope of ultimate victory for German arms, finish and complete the army's discouragement. The news of the armistice with Austria astounds the beaten soldiers, in their ranks mutiny starts. Their leaders feel that nothing is to be gained by prolonging the conflict. To-morrow a severe defeat following three months of retreat may result in the disgrace-

ful, irreparable disbanding of the troops. At this very moment—and the German General Staff is not ignorant of the fact—a formidable offensive is being prepared in Lorraine under General de Castelnau, who, since he will find opposed to him scattered and inferior opponents, will carry all before him.

Then, beaten, on the eve of certain disaster, Germany asks for grace and raises surrender's white flag. Under this protection German ministers and generals, frightened at seeing the spirit of demoralization and revolt increase hourly in their defeated armies and among their people, who are at the end of their strength—the Kaiser has taken refuge in headlong flight—cross the lines to hear our armistice conditions dictated. These conditions are harsh. Prudence and humanity would have demanded that they be even more so. Behind them the German envoys feel the growing tempest that threatens to overturn Germany so that, in their haste to announce to the German people that the war is over, they concede everything to the allied demands.

The world is free! Free peoples can hope for a



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peaceful future! Humanity is freed from the oppressive brutalities of force.

At eleven o'clock in the morning on Monday, the eleventh of November, the bells of every church and the cannon of every nearby fort announce the deliverance of the world to Paris, which instantly is adorned with flags. How joyously they wave in autumn's sun! In spite of so much mourning and anguish, joy is in all hearts. But think of what must have passed at that moment in the soul of the great French minister, whose energy, mastery of himself, unconquerable belief in justice, even in the most critical days galvanized all the workers for victory—military and civil alike—into the action that produced the triumph of the Right.

### THE TERMS OF THE ARMISTICE ARE READ IN THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES

On Tuesday, the fourth of August, 1914, as I came out of the Palais Bourbon, my eyes were full of tears, my heart was heavy with anguish. But it was full of hope. I had just been present at the session in which, at a grave communion of all the

nation's representatives, the war measures were voted. I then promised myself not to return to the Palais Bourbon until the session that announced Victory was held.

I returned to the Palais Bourbon on the eleventh of November, 1918. Alas, with what sorrow in my joy, and with what a feeling of solitude in the joyous throngs! For during those four years of furious and frightful battle, how many heroes have died that France might not die! In one day of apotheosis after so much suffering, Victory shines above France which has so well deserved it and, radiant, fills the rooms of the Palais Bourbon. Sorrow is borne along on Victory's wings, rustling in the light of freedom. But what emotion is set free throughout all this glorious day!

On that tragic afternoon in 1914, to make our way to the Chamber of Deputies, in the silence of the streets with their closed shops, in the silence of Paris suddenly emptied by mobilization, we met some women with downcast looks, grief stricken. We met some foreigners who marched behind the flags of their nations to fight for France under the tri-color, for the liberty of the world. Paris was

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firm and resigned to her fate. But the force of the drama was wearing on her, and a feeling of oppression was everywhere.

Now there were only expressions of joy and hope. In the golden sunlight of an autumn day—our happiness made the sunlight appear all the more golden—from basement to ridge-pole the city's houses were decorated. On every house, even in the most humble streets, the flags of rejoicing smiled down on crowds whose enthusiasm lent life to the city's wonderfully decked out spectacle.

The multitude marches along in the streets. Every one is decorated with a ribbon or a cockade. They are together, brought there by the necessity of being with other Frenchmen who, like them, are radiant with the same hope and the same joy. They exchange delighted words, happy smiles. One great bond of friendship unites all hearts. They don't know where they are going. But each one of the multitude finds himself moved by an instinctive need to let himself be carried along to the statues of Strassburg and Lille.

From the multitude rises a sound like the ocean's roaring. In a thousand places songs start up.

While the cannon echo the great national pride, the "Marseillaise" sounds forth everywhere. All at once, in this chaos of joy, escorts improvise themselves around a banner which some one—nobody knows who—carries. In one immense feeling of brotherhood, men and women who never saw each other before, take arms and singing, force their way through the crowds in their pilgrimage towards the statues. Somehow, in the midst of such a crowd, there is always a drum or a horn, eager to beat the rhythm or sound the note of its tremendous joy.

Oh, Michelet, you who loved France so much and spoke so movingly of her great emotions, why are you not here to write, with your ardent lyric spirit, the poem of this national brotherhood!

Farther along, people dance about a *poilu*, mad with enthusiasm, or they gather around an embarrassed Tommy, or American soldier. Then here are sailors, arms linked in those of fresh Breton girls, whose caps bob about in the crowd, opening a path through the mob as they dance their native "roulée."

Make way for this splendid procession. Through

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this anthill of people gathered about the trophies captured from the Germans and assembled in the Place de la Concorde, men force their way, dragging by a hundred ropes a Boche cannon on which are perched women and children, singing as they are dragged through the streets.

Around the Palais Bourbon the crowd is transfigured with enthusiasm and good humor. It knows perfectly well that it won't be able to get inside the building or to see anything. It simply wants to be there to take part in the great national act which is going to be accomplished. A wall may separate in a physical sense the people from this act, for the people can't get into the Chamber of Deputies itself. But the people are present. With all their souls the people are in close communion with the chief actors in the impressive ceremony that is taking place inside, for the chief actors are the mouth-piece of the people's emotion and fervor.

In the Chamber the galleries are full. I got there at the minute the doors opened. The first persons to appear in the galleries were three women in deep mourning sorrowing mothers or widows who seek

consolation in their grief by witnessing the solemn proclamation of the results which their dear ones' sacrifice has won. There will be no more of that. These mourning figures are prominently placed because it is necessary that the memory of the dead—which they symbolize—be present in the spirit of the assembly.

The representatives arrive. M. Paul Deschanel enters, his arrival being accompanied by long applause which precedes and follows him. M. Deschanel, grave, deeply moved, takes the president's chair, and I recall that meeting on the fourth of August, 1914. I hear again, as if it were yesterday, M. Viviani's firm, sad, confident speech, recalling all the vexations and threats which we had suffered for forty-four years, recalling our meritorious patience, presenting proofs of premeditated German aggression, of which we were the victims.

On that day I heard him with tears in my eyes, with fast beating heart, when he mentioned the modest naval force, none the less precious, which England already had promised us (we did not know at that time that Belgium would be invaded and that

this violation of Justice would place Great Britain on our side, upstanding, with all her forces).

Q Once again I see the six hundred deputies rise to their feet—the old revolutionist, Vaillant, first of all—at each mention of France, Alsace-Lorraine, Belgium, Serbia, and Russia, whose ambassadors occupied the diplomatic box. On that day party politics were absent from the Chamber. The spirit of the “sacred union,” for which the President, M. Raymond Poincaré, had just found the noble formula, reigned in the hearts of every man present. The drama’s opening was at hand. The first shells were about to burst. Our soldiers continued to flow through the railroad stations on their way towards the frontier. We listened with beating hearts to the story of the first battles. I still hold in my memory the short, splendid speech M. Viviani improvised when, after having gone to read the same declaration to the Senate, he returned to the Chamber. And I recall that speech by M. Deschanel, restrained and inspiring at the same time. After that began the heavy silence of battle’s eve. Here was a session one left with his very heart bruised.

But on the eleventh of November, 1918, the feeling is one of relief and of joy. It is not yet time for the conditions of the armistice to be read to the Chamber of Deputies. That moving communication shall be made at four o'clock. Waiting for that time, the deputies follow their usual procedure according to the order of the day. M. Deschanel, who occupies the president's chair as he did in 1914, as he has occupied it for fifteen years with splendid, French dignity, states that there are questions for discussion which concern the French people and that it would be noble to discuss them at such a moment. The assembly accords with this viewpoint, and the audience in the galleries, in spite of its impatience, resigns itself to waiting.

Suddenly there is a series of sounds. Some thousands of students, women and workmen, in the belief that M. Clemenceau will pass that way in proceeding from the Ministry of War to the Chamber, massed themselves in front of the Palais Bourbon and in the nearby streets. The formidable weight of this crowd, against which no one could do anything, forced its way into the court of the Palais, which is on the rue de Bourgogne. The crowd



sings the "Marseillaise"; it cheers Clemenceau and cheers him again. M. Aristide Briand, who happens along, speaks a few magician's words to them. M. Paul Deschanel, who also happens along during a brief interval of silence, directs them with a magnificent gesture towards the statue of Strassburg. M. Clemenceau appears for a moment at a window to end this interminable ovation. Very modestly, he tells his admirers to shout "Vive la France!"

The session is resumed in the Chamber. Every deputy is there, either seated or standing in a half-circle. Anxious to avoid a theatrical entrance, M. Clemenceau comes in quietly. The eyes of those present are not slow in discovering him. They recognize the familiar head, the quick, sharp-pointed glance of his black eyes. The crowd of deputies opens before him. Clemenceau enters with a slow step, his bearing is simple. A tremendous, long-drawn-out shout of recognition, of admiration and of friendliness greets him. The deputies and the spectators rise and applaud him endlessly.

Clemenceau makes a simple, grave gesture, now

to this side and now to that, with his gray-gloved hands or by an inclination of his mighty head. Now he has been seated for some time. Apparently he is perfectly calm, quite unmoved, but in reality he is deeply moved. The ovation continues. From the benches the deputies rush to clasp his hands and to thank him. The socialist Jean Bon follows Abbé Lemire—a symbol of the sacred union which is tremendously applauded.

In spite of his incomparable mastery of himself, Clemenceau is deeply moved. He feels that in this day of consummation he can give way to his emotion. Persons who know well his voice, his gestures and his facial expressions are aware that he is mastered by this emotion. In the morning of that day, when he held in his hands, duly signed, this armistice which avenges our dead, which realizes our hopes, he, whom no one had ever seen weep, burst into tears. He is the sole survivor of the protesting delegates who, in the assembly at Bordeaux, swore fidelity to Alsace-Lorraine. He has kept the solemn pledge. He feels with him all the old companions of his hope. And our hearts

place them properly at his side. It is a beautiful sight, when Clemenceau sheds these tears.

In the tribune, his raised hand asks for silence. And then, in a voice that emotion chokes, he profits by this fervent union of souls to beg that it be prolonged for France's good.

"Let us all promise, in this moment, to work always with all the strength of our hearts for the public good."

Noticeably, in this splendid day in French life, M. Clemenceau is being more simple and sober than is usual with him. As much as possible this great orator tries, in these moments, not to be eloquent, but to permit stuff that history is made of speak for itself.

After adjusting his spectacles and pushing back the green cover that binds the armistice terms, he commences briefly, with energetic dryness in his voice, under which one feels great emotion welling up, to read the articles of the armistice, far-seeing and carefully thought out, whose very harshness guarantees for us in the future the peace which our soldiers have won and which France needs to preserve her peaceful happiness.

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As we hear the well-ordered succession of precautionary measures, we feel the relief that work, long considered, clearly conceived, made with tender thought for the present and future safety of France, in which nothing is forgotten nor left to chance, brings to our hearts.

Every clause of the armistice is strongly applauded. And all this, inspired as it is by enthusiasm, happiness and appreciation, increases ten-fold to salute the portions of the armistice which assure us the best satisfactions and the most precious guarantees.

"This morning, at eleven o'clock, firing ceased on all fronts," declares M. Clemenceau, in the voice of a man who utters a cry of deliverance.

In the future no more dead, no further mutilations, no new mourning. This ends the nightmare. And as the articles of the armistice are being read, cannon sound from time to time, solemnly punctuating each one of them. It echoes under the roof of the Palais Bourbon. It echoes even more in all our hearts.

With the same spirit are saluted the clause providing for the immediate restitution of Alsace-Lor-

raine, the no less rapid return of prisoners, both military and civil, the surrender of murderous airplanes and submarines, the occupation of the Rhine frontier and of the large cities which are at the strategic bridgeheads.

Every one stands and applauds frantically when, with firm voice, with sober pride in his tones, Clemenceau recalls that it is by the force of her victorious arms that France is freed. And then, to emphasize better for the gratitude of the country's representatives, the genial and glorious leader who directed the deliverance, like a trumpet call Clemenceau pronounces the name of Marshal Foch, among the first of the names signed to the armistice.

He closes the documents containing the armistice, he removes his spectacles. Then M. Clemenceau, who so far has dispensed with all comment on the statements so justly pitiless, overcome by the sublimity of such an event and such a time, as if all other words were superfluous, pronounces these four phrases, which the cannons' imperious voices accompany :

"In the name of the French people, in the name of the Government of the French Republic, I send

the greeting of France, one and indivisible, to our regained Alsace and Lorraine."

Then, with one grand gesture, which carries his homage to all the graves scattered over France:

"Honor to our great dead, who have won this victory for us."

At this moment a new roar of cannon sounds in the glorious silence. The applause is warmer than ever.

"When our living," continued M. Clemenceau, "on their return pass in review before us on our boulevards as they march towards the Arc de Triomphe, we shall cheer them to the echo. Salute them in advance for the world they have made anew."

Then with a magnificent burst of spirit, containing the eloquence which comes forth from his French heart and from the depths of his emotion, with his arms raised above his head, he unites the glory of all stages in our country's history:

"Thanks to them France, yesterday the soldier of God, to-day the soldier of mankind, will always be in the future the soldier of the Ideal."

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The rest is silence. Silence on Clemenceau's part, that is. Mastering his emotion with simple dignity he descends from the tribune. The greater part of his hearers hasten towards him. Only to shake his hands do their hands cease applauding. An enthusiastic escort follows him to his bench, where words of gratitude keep coming to him for a long time, while the Chamber and the galleries do not tire in their applause.

M. Paul Deschanel in a short, pathetic speech, winged with inspiration, sings in his turn the deliverance of Alsace-Lorraine and the glory of our soldiers.

This hymn the thunder of cannon also accompanies. Speaking in the name of the representatives of France, over whose labors he presides and who subscribe to his sentiments with an enthusiastic ovation, M. Deschanel promises our returned province respect in every way "for their beliefs, their traditions, their customs and their liberties." A noble and solemn pledge which will be kept!

Scarcely has the long drawn out applause ceased when, with a very happy thought, M. Albert

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Thomas proposes that the representatives from Alsace-Lorraine, present during the session in the galleries, receive the honors of the Assembly. In response to a cordial gesture of invitation, M. Deschanel makes toward a box, Abbé Wetterlé, Deputy for Colmar, and the representative for Metz, M. Georges Weil in the horizon-blue uniform of a captain in the French army, are brought to the front of a box from the back of which they have followed the proceedings of the session. They bow in response to an immense ovation.

Then, since he is expected in the Senate to perform the same task, M. Clemenceau rises to make his way out. The entire Assembly rises at the same time. There is loud applause. A long cry of gratitude accompanies him to the door—"Long live Clemenceau! Long live the Republic! Long live France." And in an ardent communion of their hearts, deputies, journalists, spectators of both sexes, and even the members of the diplomatic corps sing the "Marseillaise." These are inspiring moments! Exaltation of the soul fills one's eyes with tears, consoles one a little in sorrow!

The cannon are silent. After a short suspension.



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of the session M. Renoult, President of the Commission of the Army, in a noble speech asks the Chamber to proclaim that our great soldiers and the great chiefs so worthy of them, Clemenceau and Foch, have deserved well of the State. He renders solemn homage to Marshal Joffre, the conqueror of the Marne and the Yser, he glorifies the Republic. His are eloquent, just words, which shall be remembered.

Finally, in the midst of so much applause, M. Alexandre Varenne, socialist to the depths of his French heart, with particular inspiration finds the means to gain loud applause from the Assembly by pronouncing these noble words which do him honor :

“At this most solemn moment of all history, this moment which sees a new world spring into being, we have in our hearts infinite gratitude for all those who have contributed to the work which victory has just crowned. How are we to thank them all? By taking an oath to serve them with all our strength. Union has won the victory. Let us think of to-morrow, perhaps more difficult in its problems than to-day. And let us swear not to forget

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the magnificent hour we have just lived through!"

And after the vote of thanks to Clemenceau, Foch, to the armies and to their leaders, with a last burst of applause the gathering goes its way with uplifted soul.

Outside, following four years of darkness and sadness, there is the joyous resurrection of life.

The city is illuminated. Arc lights shine down on the dancers and the joyous crowds which force their way through the streets to the sound of the "Marseillaise." Great hope fills all hearts. These are the great days of reward which France has merited by her stoicism, her courage and her faith in herself.

### FOR THE PEACE OF THE WORLD IN JUSTICE AND LIBERTY

Soon afterwards the representatives of the free nations assemble at Paris to organize peace and to preserve the future from unjust violence.

Paris, affectionate, touched and grateful, acclaim, in the person of President Wilson, the Republic of the United States, which with such superb

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enthusiasm has risen in her might to safeguard the ideal with which her birth was illuminated.

At the first meeting, by unanimous vote of the people, by the voices of President Wilson, Mr. Lloyd George, Signor Sonnino, who speak for their respective nations, with warm applause from all the delegates, M. Clemenceau is chosen President of the Peace Conference.

With what elevation and serenity of mind he speaks! With what confidence, also, in the work which is to be accomplished, in the future of the brotherly spirit of friendship which has won victory for the allied arms! These are the words in which, acknowledging the honor which was thus done to bruised, bleeding and devastated France, and to himself, he points out the grandeur in mankind's history of this imposing union of the civilized nations of the world for undertaking such a beautiful task:

"President Wilson," he said, "has particular authority for saying that this is the first time that a delegation made up of all the civilized peoples of the world is collected together. The greater the bloody catastrophe has been which has devastated and ruined one of France's richest parts, the broader

and finer ought to be the reparation, not only for actual damage—reparation in the vulgar sense, if I may say so—which is due to us, but the more noble and higher reparation which we are trying to bring about in order that peoples may escape from this fatal restraint which, piling up ruins and sorrows, terrorizes whole peoples and does not permit them to bend their energies to work through fear of the enemies who can descend upon them the next day. A great and noble eagerness has come to us all; we must hope that success will crown its efforts. It can be thus only if we have ideas which are fixed and eternal. I said some days ago in the Chamber of Deputies and I repeat here that success is possible only if we remain firmly united. WE HAVE COME HERE AS FRIENDS, WE MUST GO OUT OF THIS DOOR FRIENDS. That is the first thought I have to express to you. Everything ought to be subordinated to the necessity for the strictest union between the people who have taken part in this great war. The League of Nations is here, it is in you; it is your duty to make it live, and to bring that about it must be in your hearts. I have told President

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Wilson that there are no sacrifices to which we are not ready to consent.

"I do not doubt that you are disposed to do this.

"We shall arrive at this conclusion only on the condition of forcing ourselves to conciliate, in an impartial manner, interests apparently contradictory, only by taking the broader viewpoint of greater, happier and better humanity.

"Gentlemen, that is what I have to say to you.

"I am touched beyond expression to witness the confidence and friendship which you wish to give me.

"The program of this Conference has been set up by President Wilson; it is no longer a peace concerning greater or smaller territories which we have to make, it is no longer a peace of continents. It is a peace of peoples. This program is sufficient in itself. Further words would be superfluous to add. Gentlemen, let us try to act quickly and well."

The peace conference found in this wise and sober discourse the sentiments which animate it.

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### THE CRIME

Under the driving force of M. Clemenceau—who, while occupying himself with not letting France be enslaved under her glorious but terrible ruins, thinks only of establishing the reign of liberty and justice in the world—the Peace Conference was following to completion its difficult work when an assassin's revolver just missed striking down this energy which is employed only for mankind's peaceful development.

The crime was the deed of a weak minded person, intoxicated by anarchistic proposals, the unthinking worker of German hatred, which in the future can count only on the deeds of the Bolsheviki, in all the allied countries, to escape reparation for its crimes.

Happily, although the assassin's bullets lodged very near certain vital organs, the great old man's astonishing physical youth quickly repaired the disorders resulting from such a grave wound, which, especially at that age, might well have been mortal.

France understood that in striking down Clemenceau, the incarnation of the French soul and of

French hopes, it was France herself who was aimed at.

From the moment when the news of that crime was made known, in every part of our country and in every class of the people a great cry of anguish and horror arose. For two weeks an uninterrupted stream of old men, soldiers, students, women and young girls came to the illustrious wounded man's modest lodgings with flowers in their hands to express words of indignation, gratitude and hope.

Besides, by the unanimous manifestations of their anxiety and their sadness, the free peoples expressed that they considered the attack on M. Clemenceau an attack against the great peaceful reorganization of the world of which they will all be the beneficiaries.

M. Clemenceau alone, in the sad emotion of the first moments, preserved his sang-froid, his spirituelle joviality and the good humor which never forsakes him, just as he always did in the most critical times.

On foot, calm, with slow steps, in spite of the bullet which interfered with his breathing, he

crossed the vestibule and the court of his house, as he made his way towards his apartment.

Perhaps he was a little pale—one would be—but he marched in his usual way with his shoulders erect, his black eye sharp and keen, his fighting cap in its usual position on the corner of his head. And in his face the bystanders noticed the astonished and sardonic smile usually there when he is face to face with something stupid or dull.

Twenty minutes later he had sufficient moral and physical strength to tell M. Raymond Poincaré—the President of the Republic who had affectionately hurried there to tell him his patriotic sense of relief and his personal happiness to see M. Clemenceau unharmed—with the humor which is peculiar to him, his impressions while the shooting was going on:

“When I felt the whistle of the first bullet so near my head I muttered, ‘The animal shoots well.’ At the second shot (which was indiscreet enough to get inside of me as far as my lung), I said, ‘But he shoots too well.’ Finally, under this rain of bullets which whistled about my ears and almost didn’t stop there, I reflected, ‘at least my enemies will not



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be able to insinuate any longer that I haven't ballast in my head—lead ballast.' ”

Thus, compelling himself to be like himself in this supreme peril—as in all the dangerous hours of his life—M. Clemenceau added some picturesque words to the ineffaceable anecdotes which can be told about his energy and sang-froid.

These words, thought out and pronounced in such a moment, make us understand better the mastery which such a man could keep over his nerves and brain in the great war's most terrible hours.

For the peaceful future of all the free peoples as well as for the rebuilding of murdered France, what good fortune it is that the glorious old man, so clear sighted and so resolute, stands at the helm of our country's ship of state!

This last scene throws in brilliant relief the man's attractive figure. France, happy in finding in him her ardent, firm and jovial soul, salutes M. Clemenceau as “Minister of Victory.” This title history will preserve for him.

THE END









